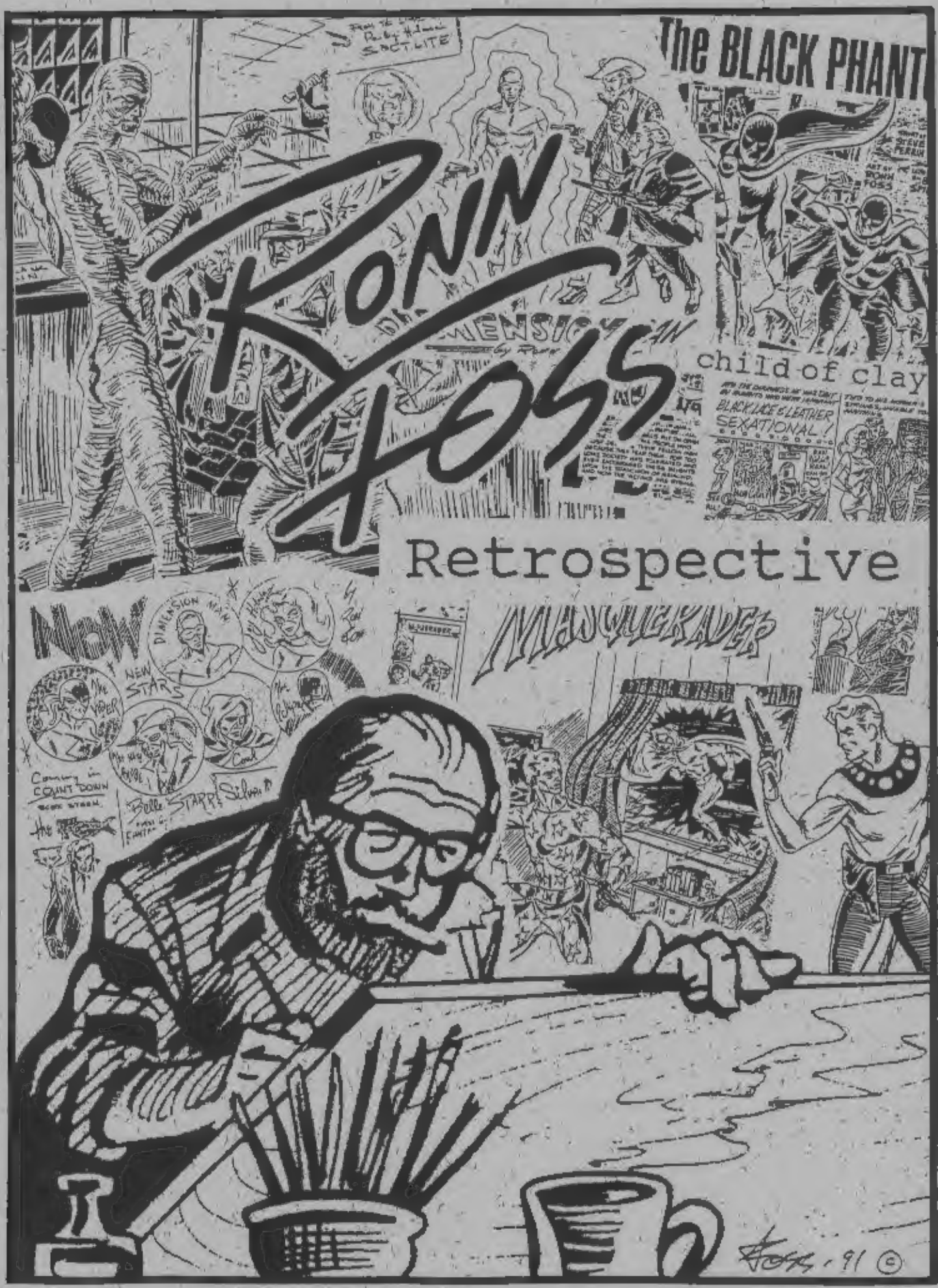
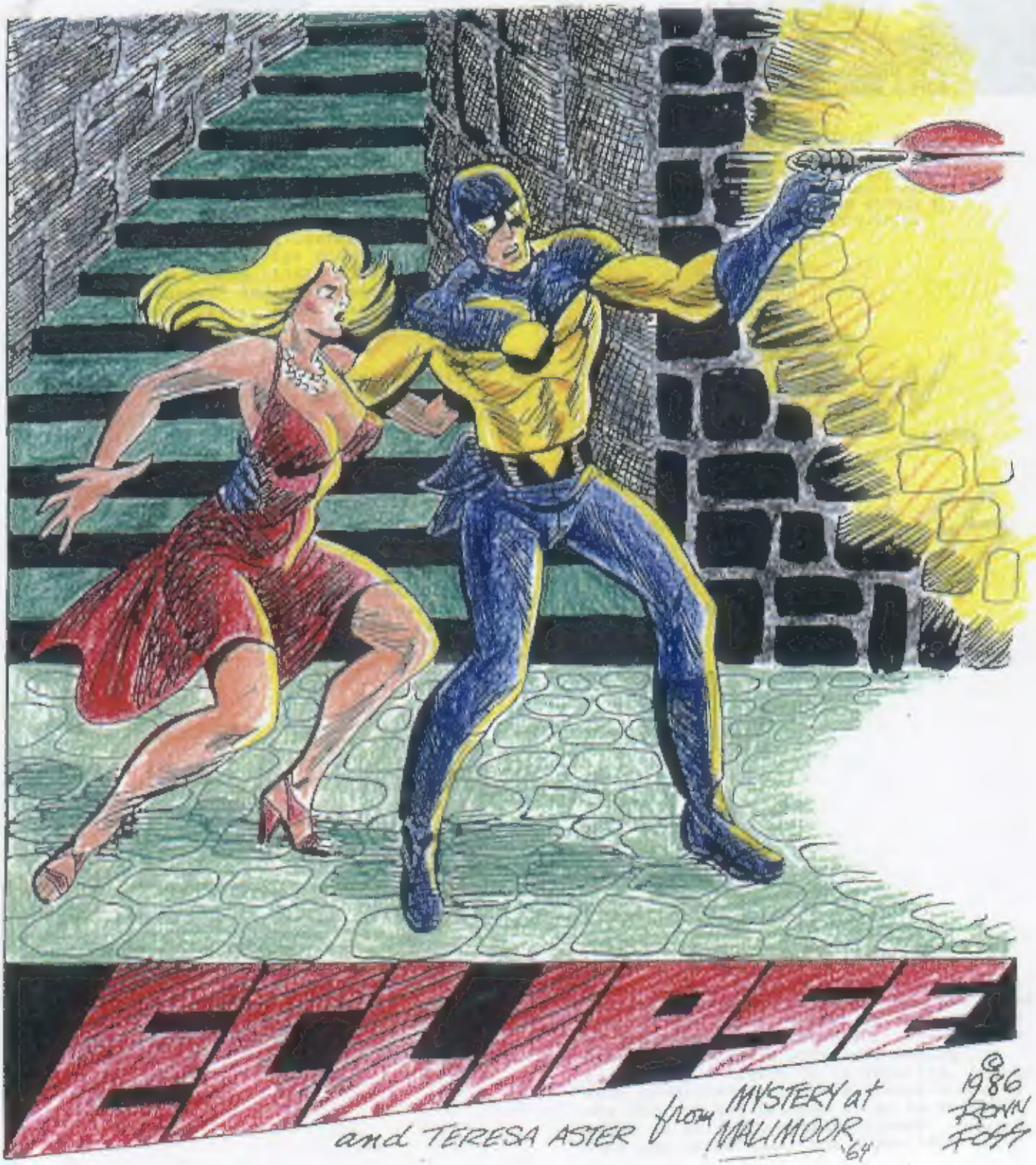

The BLACK PHANTOM
RONN FOSS
child of clay
Retrospective
NOW
NEW STARS
MIDNIGHTERS
Foss · 91 ©

Ronn Foss Retrospective 2



From the cover
of ALTER EGO #5

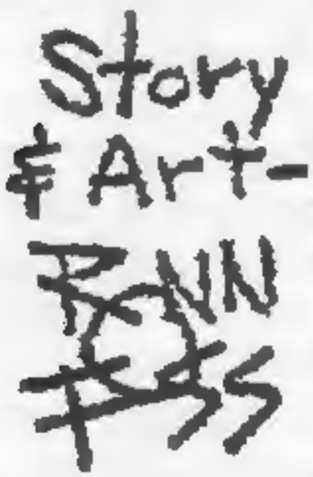
Comic Fandom Turns 31!

It's hard to believe, but 1992 marks the 31st Anniversary of Comics Fandom ... if you count from the publication of ALTER-EGO #1 in 1961. How time flies!

It's time to begin documenting those years, particularly the early stages of our history. Fans lose touch, memories dim, and first hand sources become increasingly elusive.

Ronn Foss is, of course, a first hand source extraordinaire. He was there ... almost from the very beginning, picking up the reigns of A-E from Jerry Bails in 1962, creating the first Alley Award statuettes, and drawing a series of dynamic, innovative comic strips that set the standard. It's my view that Ronn is the only amateur artist of the era worthy of consideration alongside pro artists of the Silver Age. His work, aside from its intrinsic merits, reflected the social milieu of the 1960's, from the James Bond craze to the social protests that came during the VietNam War and civil rights struggles.

In preparing this special retrospective, I've had the opportunity to get to know Ronn, and I've discovered that he's a rare combination of introspection and generosity. I also learned just how much Fandom meant, and continues to mean, to him... and how much he had given to it. This fanzine is a small attempt to "give back" to him something for all the hours



Self Caricature

he spent at the drawing board and typewriter, out of love for the medium and its fans.

This was originally Richard Pryor's idea, "thought up while drinking Ronn's homemade wine," as he put it. But when Richard's family obligations and other projects for K-a came to the fore, I stepped in as both editor and publisher. An aspiring artist when I entered Fandom in 1964, Ronn was my idol. Later he did the cover to SENSE OF WONDER #1. We had a "history" and I felt strongly about this project.

The hardest part was deciding what to include, given the scope and sheer volume of the man's work. I decided to 1) try to represent all or most of the heroes and heroines that Ronn was known for in the 1960's, 2) include a sampling of early or unfinished pieces that were not deemed suitable for publication before now, 3) showcase at least one complete strip full-sized, and 4) span the course of his 35+ years as a graphic artist.

You hold the finished product in your hands. This material, much of it coming from Ronn's personal files, has never been gathered together before ... nor has he been interviewed until now. I hope you enjoy this "close-up" look at the life of one of Fandom's founders, and am eager to hear your comments.

Bill Schelly

RONN FOSS RETROSPECTIVE #1 (January 1992) is edited and published by William Schelly, 3032 N.E. 130th St., Seattle, Wa., 98125. It is a limited edition publication intended for comics apa CAPA-alpha. All artworks herein, with the exception of The Eye by Biljo White, are © copyright 1992 by Ronn Foss. Text material © copyright 1992 by William Schelly.

Bill Schelly

Bill Schelly's

Interview with

Ronn Foss

Ronn Foss was one of the most widely known and popular fan artists of the Golden Age of Comic Fandom. A man of many talents and wide-ranging interests, he had created his first costumed heroes while in high school, often in tandem with Richard 'Grass' Green, another important artist in early Fandom.

Unlike many artists who came later, Ronn had reached adulthood when he created his many highly-visible strips, first in ditto and then in photo offset. His mature sensibility lent a sheen of sophistication to his efforts.

While Foss is the first to acknowledge the influence of Joe Kubert's excellent work on Tor and other features from the 1950's, his style is unique and unmistakable. The figures have a spontaneity and restless energy that makes them burst from the page. He was one of the first fan artists to experiment with the Craft-Tint shading process and wash work. He had few peers in the depiction of stalwart heroes, yet he was reknown for his interpretation of the female form. Good Girl Art became a Foss trademark.

Ronn Foss, along with Biljo White, was the closest we had to an Artist Laureate in those days. In Comicdom's Camelot, Foss may not have been King, but he was certainly Crown Prince. At one point, he edited and published both THE COMICOLLECTOR and ALTER EGO, the two most important and influential fan magazines of their day.

For a while, it seemed like wherever a fan turned, he or she happily encountered a Foss illustration or strip. The Eclipse, The Cowl, Dimension Man, The Viper, Belle Starr, The Fox and many others graced the pages of the top fanzines, generally meeting with approval. Just about every fan editor ended up knocking on Ronn's door, or mailbox.

As his attention wandered from the super hero genre, he pushed the graphic story medium into new areas, with socially relevant strips like Black Phantom (in collaboration with Steve Perrin), the first major black protagonist in the fanzines, and Excel, which delved into the turbulent political struggles of the Nixon Era.

Yet, after an incredibly prolific decade, Ronn Foss seemed to disappear from our view. Comicdom itself was changing, with the Overstreet Price Guide normalizing back issue prices and amateur publications becoming increasingly dominated by pro artists. Where had Foss gone? What was he up to?

After finally tracking him down to a backwoods cabin in the Missouri Ozarks, I discovered that Ronn had not been idle.

(See Next Page...)

Interview

Ronn's rustic cabin is located on wooded land in the gorgeous Ozark country, bordered by the Mark Twain National Forest. From his windows, you can see a mile of woods in all directions. But on a cold November day, you'd probably find yourself huddling near the woodstove in his 12' by 16' work room.

The room is lined with bookshelves and crowded from floor to ceiling with the memorabilia of a fannish life -- "my major mess," he calls it. Yet one feels that he likes it that way.

With the lights low, the pine and oak fire sends golden speckles across the ceiling like sun dancing on water. Ronn hunches near the stove, and you notice his hair has thinned from those 1960's photos, and his beard is grey now. But as he fiddles with the fire with one hand and puffs on a hand-rolled cigarette in the other, his eyes glitter with the enthusiasm of someone half his age.

Perhaps as a result of going days without speaking very much to anyone, his voice at first is measured, as if he's choosing his words carefully. Yet before long, the contents of his ever-present coffee mug works its magic, and its clear that Ronn relishes the chance to gab.

Bill: Let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

Ronn: I was born Ronald Eugene Foss on Bastille Day in the year of GONE WITH THE WIND and NINOTCHKA, in Defiance, Ohio ... and like to think the old Fort gave me my sense of rebellion.

Bill: 1939 was also the year of THE WIZARD OF OZ and many others, a great movie year. It's interesting that you mention your rebellious side right away.

Ronn: I've always been a rebel of sorts. Isn't that what this country was founded upon? Rejection of control by others?

Bill: Were you a teenage rebel like James Dean in REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE?

Ronn: I was never the obvious trouble-making rebel. I simply questioned everything, and I do to this day. Far too much is touted, publicized and perpetuated as being unquestionable fact. My experience has proven to me that a great deal of what is espoused as fact is hogwash. Anyway, that's my rebelliousness, only from a mainstream point of view.

In high school there was a quote teenage gang unquote who called themselves the Sons of Satan, wore leather jackets and so on. Rumor was that the girls who hung out with them were called the Daughters of Desire. But so much of that was innuendo and rumor ... and I was never a part of it.

I related, as most teenagers did, to Dean in REBEL and Brando ... but not in the challenge society, throw-it-in-their face type of attitude. More in the sense of questioning and doubting. I think it was Thomas Jefferson who said there should be some sort of rebellion every few years, just to keep everything honest.

Bill: You grew up on small farms. What are your primary memories of your early childhood?

Ronn: To me, growing up on a farm was probably the ultimate freedom. You'd look out your window and there were no other buildings in sight, no traffic, none of the neon and noise of the cities. Just woods, trees, wildlife ... the sound of a distant freight train. We heated with coal, and many's the time I went with my father walking along the railroad tracks with a burlap flour sack picking up coal that would fall off the trains.

It was playing among the tall corn, which to me was like a jungle. It was sling shots, using stones against tin cans. It was climbing up the ladder in a big, big barn, playing in the hay, and diving into bins of grain. It was gathering around the radio in the evenings to listen to all the old favorites of the 40's, like The Shadow, Green Hornet, Fibber McGee and Molly, Fred Allen. "Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear...."

It was a relatively carefree life back then. I suppose in a way what I'm doing in a similar situation today. Trying to get back home again.

Bill: How would you describe your family life?

Ronn: My father was pretty much a jack of all trades. At times a truck driver, at times a machinist. I had two sisters, both younger than I. I was the first born. The house was always woodframe, usually big. We each had our own bedroom, either raw board floors or linoleum, sparsely furnished. I recall moving every year or two in my first ten years. Different houses, different locations, all in Ohio or Indiana. My biggest hate was the school bus trip in the middle of winter, standing out there half-frozen waiting for it.

"I've always been a rebel...."

Bill: What kind of school did you attend?

Ronn: It was a little red brick school house with eight grades in one room, each row a different grade. So we never got very much attention from the teacher, maybe an hour a day, if that. Thus it was fairly free.

Bill: How did you get interested in comics?

Ronn: In 1946, at the age of 7, I was given lots of CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES, MARVEL FAMILY, WHIZ COMICS and MASTER COMICS by an uncle who strongly resembled the Big Red Cheese. Slightly overweight, wavey hair, arched eyebrows and that perpetual smiling squint. I saved those for almost ten years until I traded them all for a like amount of E.C. comics. Although I liked the relatively simplistic cartoony Captain by Beck and others, I preferred Mac Raboy's more realistic work on Marvel Jr. By the time I was a teenager, I was ready to love the science fiction and fantasy stuff by Williamson, Frazetta, Wood, Crandall and the others.

By this time, I'd already collected most of BATMAN, DETECTIVE and WORLD'S FINEST, since I liked the believability of a man in a mask and cape driving a car, as opposed to the alien Superman and family. Although I'd enjoyed the Kirk Alyn serials, my choice was Rocketman, for the same reasons. My favorite serial is KING OF THE ROCKETMEN, also SPY SMASHER for the action and THE PHANTOM EMPIRE with Gene Autry.

Bill: When did you start creating your own comic strips?

Ronn: In 1949. That's when I did digest-sized comics, 8 & 1/2 by 11 inches folded in half, of my own character, The Black Widow, unaware of the heroine of the same name from the 1940's. Mine was alternately male, female or western, as the mood struck.

Bill: Did the anti-comics hysteria being whipped up by Dr. Fredric Wertham affect you?

Ronn: Sometime in the early 50's, I guess '51 to '53, just before going to high school, I know I took a lot of flak from my parents -- that is my father, not my mother, she was rather sympathetic -- but my dad, and my relatives, who knew that I liked to draw and saw I wanted to be a professional ... they gave me a great deal of static. Because at that time there was a lot of publicity about the alleged bad influence of comics on young minds. It was especially hard to be a comics fan and collector at that time.

Bill: When did you meet Richard 'Grass' Green?

Ronn: I met Grass in 1953 or 1954 in high school in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He'd also been doing his own homemade comics, so we spent lots of weekends together drawing and creating new heroes. We also spent a lot of time on the phone together, an hour or two every other night, discussing comics and our creations. We were best buddies... haunting local second-hand stores for old comics, just a nickel each. Neither of us ever had more than a half dollar to spend. We acquired such treasures as WHIZ #1, BATMAN #6 and early BOY COMMANDOS.

Bill: In THE EYE SPECIAL #1, Biljo White mentions that you and Grass at least partly inspired that memorable amateur character, The Eye. Was this a character you created during your days as a 'team'?

Ronn: We each had a list of a thousand characters, though many sounded similar. Blue Demon, Capt. Demon, Fighting Demon, and so on. The Eye was one of them. If memory serves, and this could be backwards, I think the name The Eye was my idea, and Grass did the first drawing.

REFCO'S

Captain TELEVISION

July 26, 1956

SHORTLY AFTER THE YEAR 2057, EVERY NATION ON EARTH HAS JOINED IN A PEACE PACT - ALL EFFORTS NOW BEING DIRECTED TOWARD THE CONQUEST OF OUR GALAXY...

A YOUNG WAR VETERAN DISPLAYED HEROISM BEFORE THE WORLD, AND WAS COMMISSIONED AN ASTEROID WHICH CIRCLES THE EARTH! SOON HE EARNED THE TITLE: CAPTAIN UNIVERSE, MASTER OF SPACE

ALONG WITH MYRA STARR, DAUGHTER OF THE INTERPLANETARY POLICE, AND A YOUNG CADET, HE KEPT A CONSTANT VIGILANCE ON THE NEARBY PLANET J-

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THEM, CAPT.

I CAN'T TELL YET, DICK.. ONE THING SURE - THEY'RE ALIEN.

LOOK! ONE OF THEM IS TRYING TO LAND... BUT THE OTHER IS FIRING ON IT!!

THE SHIP THAT WAS SHOT DOWN IS FROM VENUS, BUT WHERE'S THE OTHER FROM, CAP?

I DON'T KNOW, DICK! IT'S MARKINGS ARE STRANGE!!

AS CAPTAIN UNIVERSE AND DICK ATOM PULL A SURVIVOR FROM THE WRECKAGE, THE ALIEN SHIP CIRCLES, AND...

CAP, CAP, IT'S COMING BACK TO STRIP US!

CAPTAIN UNIVERSE '56, 8X11

RONN FOSS

But neither of us ever did a story or comic strip with it. A few years later, Biljo latched onto the idea, liked it very much, and he did the story. The giant eye ball helmet was either Grass' idea or mine, but Biljo is the one who made something out of it.

Bill: What were the current comics that you collected?

Ronn: The E.C.'s, of course, especially their science fiction titles. Also YOUNG MEN'S ADVENTURES from Atlas, with new stories of Captain America, The Human Torch and Submariner. I distinctly recall the sudden disappearance of EC horror. By the mid-fifties, comics had been reduced from their former profusion to just SUPERMAN, BATMAN and WONDER WOMAN from D.C., GHOST RIDER from Magazine Enterprises, Dell's TARZAN, and Joe Maneely's exceptional BLACK KNIGHT, RINGO KID and YELLOW CLAW.

I also distinctly recall picking up the first issue of MAD, because it looked so totally different from any other magazine on the stand and being absolutely blown away by its zaniness. I really loved MAD.

I remember when Prize brought out Simon & Kirby's FIGHTING AMERICAN and St. John published TOR by Joe Kubert. Grass liked Simon & Kirby, while I was a fan of Kubert's Tor, and Hawkman in FLASH issues.

Bill: That's not too surprising, since Grass' and your work showed the influence of those particular favorites. Do you still have any of the art or strips you created during this period?

Ronn: My oldest surviving drawings are from 1956. Captain TV, inspired by Simon & Kirby's Captain 3-D, and Steelman, inspired by H. G. Peters' Man o' Metal in REG'LAR FELLERS HEROIC comics. Other characters were the Brothers of Adventure, the Ghost and Captain Fortune. Since these were hand-colored, they won't photocopy well. Some of my early drawings are signed 'Gene' Foss, which is what I went by for awhile. I had the foresight to date much of my work, as well as copyright, I'm glad to see today.

In addition to the early comic strip-type art, I also draw posters, comic strips, and cartoons for the weekly school paper and yearbook, as well as constructing advertising for the Quimby Theaters in Fort Wayne for showings of THE MUMMY, MAN WITH THE ATOM BRAIN, HOUSE OF BAMBOO and so on. I also did TV artwork for two different Junior Achievement shows and was interviewed on a third.

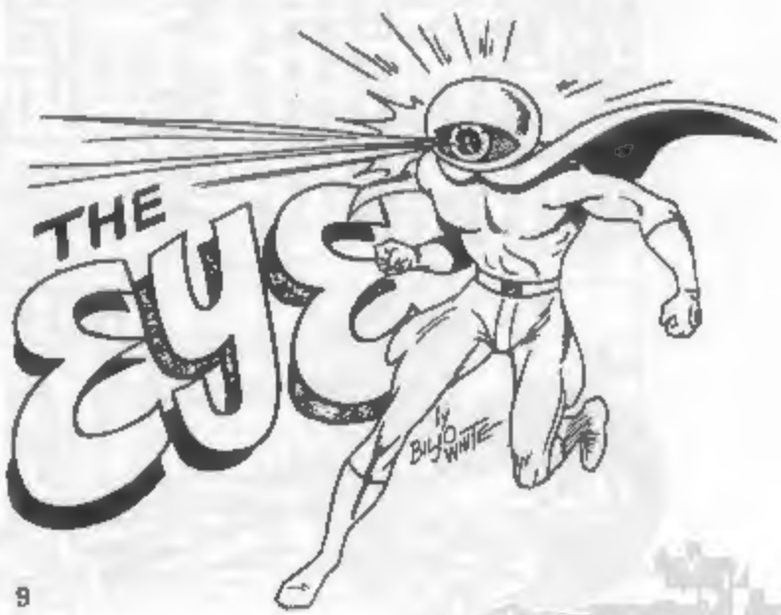
Bill: Did you have any formal art training?

Ronn: In probably the second year of high school, when I was getting a few acknowledgements on my art work, my father looked into correspondence art schools, such as Famous Artists. It cost something like $200 to $300, which he found far too much. So instead he got me the $20 or $30 course from Pleasant Hill, Ohio, that you see in a lot of magazine ads, "Learn to Draw Cartoons." This course was so pathetically dated, it was something out of the '30's that had never been updated. It was next to useless. I did however go on to win a scholarship to weekend art classes where I began doing figure art in my senior year.

I did my first oil paintings outside of art classes in high school. A placid boat dock with a mid-eastern sailing ship ... breakers on a beach at sunset ... a black cat looking at the viewer. One of a wino with his head in his hands. There was also one of the head of my dad with a skull showing through the blue-black flesh, eyes in shadow and lips in a permanent grimace.

Bill: Looking at your resume, I see you left high school in March of 1957, getting your G.E.D. rather than graduating.

Ronn: Yes, I joined the Air Force, or Air Farce as I like to call it, in 1957 and was sent to Saudi Arabia. Since one is likely to be there only once, most guys took up 35mm photography, which I also did, learning dark room processing as well. This was when I began filming 8mm movies. My first one I called ASSIGNMENT: ARABIA.



HELLO—THIS IS GENE FOSS, EDITOR OF Reflex Enterprizes Unlimited! IN THE PAST SIX YEARS, I'VE PRODUCED COMIC MAGAZINES WITH THEMES OF ADVENTURE, ROMANCE, WESTERN, COMEDY, EDUCATION, AND SCIENCE FICTION... HOWEVER, NONE QUITE LIKE WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO READ! CONSIDER IF YOU WILL, A REALM BEYOND THE CAPACITY OF REASONING - AN ERA OF THE MIND, A PLANE OF THOUGHT THAT'S VISITED AND SEEN, YET

NEVER KNOWN!

FOSS-59

At last, the event the world has prepared itself for since time began— a man is about to rocket out into space. into the void NEVER KNOWN!

WE'RE READY TO BEGIN THE COUNTDOWN, DOCTOR ALLEN— ARE YOU ALL SET!

YES, I I'M READY!!

THIS IS GROUND ZERO TO ALL STATIONS— X MINUS THIRTY SECONDS!

The remaining moments of a man's earthbound existance has begun—

X MINUS 5 SECONDS... 4-3-2-1-FIRE!!

The gleaming metal vehicle shudders momentarily, loosing itself from the grips of Earth—

Then screams skyward, into the vastness of infinity- a

BRRRRROOOMM!!

On earth, the rocket's course is tracked by radar and observatories—

HE'S ON HIS WAY— AND SOON WE WILL SEE FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON!

The ship slips into the gravitational field of the moon, and—

THIS IS DR ALLEN TO EARTH- I AM ABOUT TO PASS IN THE MOON'S DARKENED SIDE!

ALLEN TO EARTH I AM ON THE DARK SIDE AND ABOUT TO RELEASE ROCKET FLARES— STAND BY FOR A REPORT!

A pre arranged firing device sends the flares down, one behind the other—

IN JUST A MOMENT, WE WILL KNOW!

As the flares illuminate the terrain below

A- GOOD LORD! IF IT CAN'T BE! A CIVILIZATION!!

A VERY EARLY, UNPUBLISHED STRIP— MY VERSION OF 'THE TWYLIGHT ZONE'

A CIVILIZATION! DR ALLEN, YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!!
I TELL YOU I SEE A CITY BELOW! AND FIGURES MOVING AROUND!
DR ALLEN, YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED YOUR MISSION, RETURN TO EARTH! THE CAMERAS WILL PROVE—
BAH! I HAVE DONE NOTHING YET - I MUST LAND AND MEET THESE INHABITANTS!
DR ALLEN, YOU ARE NOT TO LAND, DO YOU HEAR? YOU MUST RETURN TO EARTH!
BUT I— I ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT, I'M COMING BACK! THIS IS ALLEN SIGNING OFF!
A CITY ON THE MOON! RIDICULOUS! DR ALLEN MUST HAVE BEEN UNDER TERRIFIC EMOTIONAL STRAIN UP THERE ALL ALONE!
PROF. SIMS, THE MOON ROCKET IS LANDING RIGHT NOW!
BUT-BUT, IT JUST LEFT THE MOON! IT CAN'T BE HERE ALREADY-YET, IT IS!!
THAT'S NOT ALL, SIR! THE SHIP IS EMPTY! DR ALLEN IS NOT ABOARD!
HE- HE COULDN'T HAVE LEFT THE SHIP! HE HAD NO PRESSURE SUIT AND THE ROCKET— HOW DID IT GET BACK?
HERE! THE POLAROID PICTURES THEY'RE ALL BLANK— ALL OVER-EXPOSED!
WHAT DID DR ALLEN REALLY SEE ON THE MOON? WHY WASN'T HE ABOARD THE SHIP? THIS WILL REMAIN NEVER KNOWN!

SAND. NOABA '57

"THE ROCKET INCIDENT!"
IT WAS MARCH 7TH—ABOUT 2130 HOURS. THAT'S 9:30 PM FOR THE BENEFIT OF YOU CIVILIANS! MY ROOM MATE AND I WERE PUTTING THE FINAL TOUCHES ON THE MODEL AIRPLANES WE'D ASSEMBLED SINCE SUPPER TIME.
WELL SEE JAG WELL SEE LET'S GO OUT ON THE BACK STAIRS AND
JAG WALKED HIS AWAY WITH
LOOK A

I WENT BY MIDDLE NAME THEN; GENE

PENCIL, 8x11

Interview

Bill: Did you create any strips when you were overseas?

Ronn: I didn't get much drawing done that year. There was too much to see and do, like water-skiing. Grass and I maintained an ongoing lengthy correspondence, though some of our letters reaching 125 pages with lots of drawing included! We called 'em booters, short for book-letters

Bill: There are a few things, like the pencils for an incomplete strip called "The Rocket Incident." What was that about?

Ronn: That was to be the true story of how I built a six inch balsa wood rocket, and improvised an engine wrapping a lot of layers of aluminum foil around firecracker powder. One night we stepped out on to the back porch. I held it in my hands, and my buddy lit a match to it. I felt a thrust of energy, and held on a moment too long ... because the thing exploded in my hand. We were standing there for a microsecond in a ball of fire.

There was a tremendous **boom** The foil just ripped to shreds, and mildly cut our faces. We were a pretty bloody couple of guys when the Air Police came to investigate.

Bill: Sounds like you were lucky it didn't end your drawing career right then and there. Were you able to take all or part of your comic collection overseas with you?

Ronn: No, I left my entire collection safe at home housed in a huge footlocker When I came back a year later, my parents told me that it had been stored in the basement, which had flooded. So all my comics were soaked!

Rather than risk drying them outside in the sun and air, I had them scattered all about the floor of my room. I mean, you could hardly tip toe through them. And one day my dad ambled in, asked me to letter the mailbox with his name, and callously just stomped right across them... squish squish! That was the first time in my life at age eighteen that I ever hit the ceiling and had it out with him. I'm basically a quiet, reserved fella but we went toe-to-toe that day.

Bill: After your year in the Middle East, where were you stationed?

Ronn: In 1958 through 1960, I was stationed at Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, California, which is 45 miles from San Francisco. I spent lots of my free time in the North Beach area, digging jazz and poetry and more expressive arts than cartooning

Bill: Your description of the North Beach area conjures up images of coffee houses, bongos and Jack Kerouac Were you involved in the beatnik scene?

Ronn: Yes, I was really caught up in that scene in 1958 and 1959. It strongly appealed to me. I felt sympatico with beat poetry and music. I loved jazz, good solid '50's experimental jazz. I was first turned on to black blues by a black roommate in the Air Force and being that we were but an hour from San Francisco, we'd go there just about every weekend I've always loved San Francisco. It's a beautiful city with a distinctly international flavor. First we'd hit Chinatown, going through it just soaking up all the exotic smells and sights, and then continue past the Tenderloin to the North Beach section where jazz was streaming out the doors

You'd look in the windows and see sunglasses ... turtleneck sweaters ... a lot of black clothes ... artists painting girls actually swinging on swings indoors, what they called the 'swinging scene.' The expresso . . the posters on the wall. I once caught a glimpse, in fact, of Kerouac, wailing on skins. And about a block away was City Lights bookshop run by Lawrence Ferlingetti. It had lots of beat poetry, hand made publications. I read a lot of Allen Ginsberg, and felt a tremendous affinity with their counter, or at least alternative culture.

In 1959, I started accumulating free verse -- prose, poems -- and around 1961, I ran off about fifty copies on ditto of a little booklet I called FAR GONE, LIKE LOST AND LOOKING BACK. (See excerpts)

Bill: What type of art were you doing then?

Ronn: I continued to work on various projects, and did my first double-sized inked work then, a UFO strip called "They're Here," which I sent to Atlas in 1959 when they were still doing science fiction titles. I never received a response or my artwork back. The only remnant is an unfinished page, my first attempt at double-size

Bill: Didn't your first marriage happen around this time?

Ronn: Yes, shortly after I got back from Arabia My first wife was a high school

sweetheart. Her name was Myra. We simply married too young. I was nineteen. She was only seventeen. We were married in 1958 and it lasted less than two years. We parted amicably. No children. She did not share my idea of a rustic lifestyle.

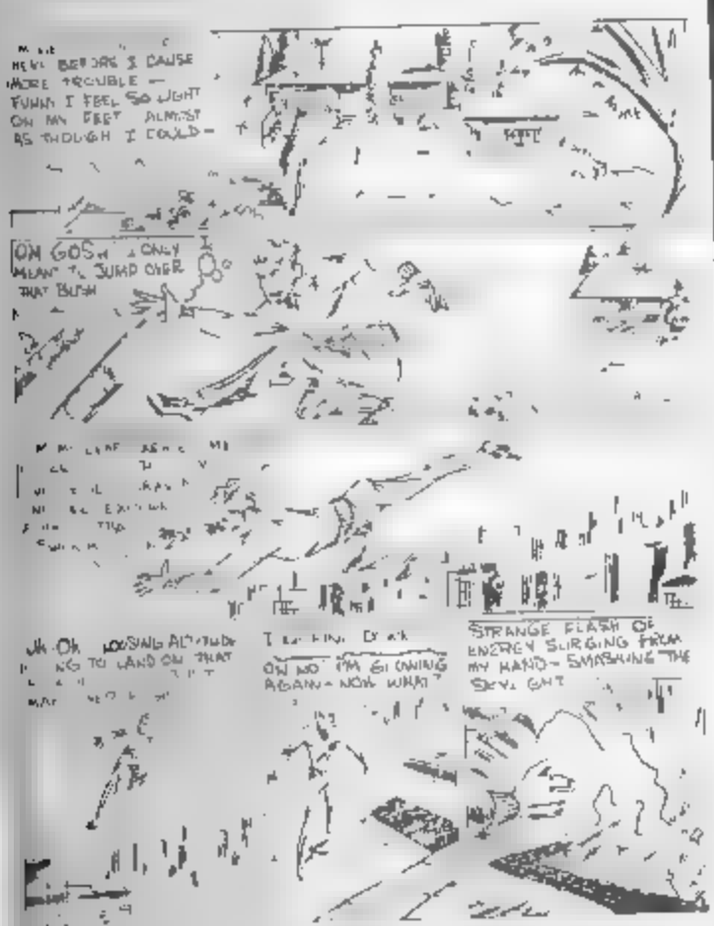
I was discharged from the military in March of 1961.

Bill: There's an interesting coincidence. According to the History of Comics Fandom in the Overstreet Price Guide, ALTER EGO #1 was published in March of 1961. Was this how you heard about Comics Fandom?

Ronn: No, I answered Ed Lahmann's letter in a BRAVE & BOLD letter column. We traded a few comics and exchanged letters for about a year. Ed eventually sent me ALTER EGO #3, which began my correspondence with Jerry Bails. I had also done a few illos, covers and a strip for E.C. and Mad fandoms by this time

Bill: Your earliest strips were done in ditto. What was the first one?

Ronn: My first published strip was "Limbo," a 2 pager which appeared in Don Dohler's WILD. The first complete super hero strip was The Dimension Man origin in Perley Holman's SPOTLITE #1. Then there was the Little Giant story, "The Wheel that Menaced Washington!" which was


NEVER BEFORE I CAUSE MORE TROUBLE — FUNNY I FEEL SO LIGHT ON MY FEET ALMOST AS THOUGH I COULD —
OH GOSH I ONLY MEANT TO JUMP OVER THAT BUSH
STRANGE FLASH OF ENERGY SURGING FROM MY HAND — SMASHING THE SKYLIGHT
OH NO I'M BEGINNING AGAIN — NOW WHAT?

LITTLE GIANT from Headline #1, "The Wheel That Menaced Washington!" by S. G. Ross (Steve Gerber) and Ronn Foss, ditto, 1961.

From

Far Gone

like lost and looking back

beat poetry

by Ronn Foss (1958 - 1961)

San Francisco 1958 New Year
Chinatown Grant Street North Beach
Moto and I peering in The Coexistance Bagel Sh
daring each other to enter like kids we were
Wow the crowd of beards and black sweaters
we walked on up past The Place
chick in window large front playing piano
Again we urged each other and shook heads
Cavalier costumed poet leads lady I wonder
Across street we boldly entered Coffee Gallery
Man they weren't drinking expresso
it was beer and booze and us thirsty
more for to fall in than dry like
So we made that coffee scene by ordering
but waiter in sandals asked for I.D.'s Please
Is eighteen we told him Cool It
he shook head said Police Action
Gotta have Identification Card
we sighed and left
paced streets all night
with ring balogna and French bread

***

1959 I'm back in North Beach Dec. 31
this time with her
We dig the scene and all up and down
City Lights book shop basement
loaded with ascetic/esoteric publications
like
Abomonist Manifesto and other way out titles
printed mimeo on pulp paper sometimes
wrapping paper or sack-like manila
black and blue on tan or yellow-white
Me impressed and influenced
Jack Kerouac
Norman Mailer
Allen Ginsberg
Henry Miller
and others with something
anything to say
College students and businessmen reading
perhaps wondering
or wandering as I
could spend the night there
But she's with me wants to go
up stairs bulletin board
messages want Zen lessons or to give
Yoga and Ride to L.A or Sax for Sale
Black door downstairs CASSANDRA'S across Str
jazz streaming out into neon lit fog night
We go in attempted unconcern shades on sitti
mosaic square tiled table
espresso thirty-five cents a cup we order
Four orders later
she's excited by sounds so we cut
across street Tivoli Hotel upstairs room
Thunderbird back and forth we empty
to bed and back we go
Same table but no more coffee
writing in notebook
these very pages I still have
here

LIMBO
SOMEWHERE UNKNOWN EVEN TO US, A FIGURE STIRS —
UHH M-MY HEAD! —CAN'T RECALL WHAT HAPPENED, HOW I GOT HERE!
THAT'S A CARVED OUT BY FOSS
WOOD COULD'VE IF WOOD COULD'VE BUT WOOD DOESN'T SO MAYBE I SHOULDN'T —
SO THIS IS THE PLACE I MADE IT!
WELCOME, PINKMAN!
C-CAPT. MARVELOUS! IT'S REALLY YOU AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE? YOU WERE REVIVED—
YEAH, BUT I WASN'T NEAR AS APPRECIATED AS I COULD BE, IT GOT SO BAD THEY WANTED TO STICK ME WITH THE ADUM!

MAN, THERE'S TOO MANY IN IT NOW!
WELL, DON'T TAKE IT TOO HARD WE'RE ALL HAPPY HERE
WHAT I'LL MISS
MAN, THEY EVEN PUT OUT A LOT OF AMATEUR MAGS ABOUT US ALL!
WHAT'S MORE SOME OF THE FANS HAVE BEEN AROUND A GOOD WHILE
YOU MAY AS WELL TRY TO FORGET- THERE'S NO HOPE TO RETURN!
HOW ABOUT BILLY BATSON MAYBE HE COULD
WORTH A TRY
ZAM!
BOOM

MY FIRST PUBLISHED STRIP...

PUBLISHED IN DON DOHLER'S WILD ... © '9..

written by Steve Gerber under the pen name S. G. Ross. That saw print in the first issue of Steve's fanzine, HEADLINE. These all appeared in 1961.

In 1961 and 1962, I got back into drawing comic strips with a character known variously as Mystery Man, Thunderman and Dynaman ... eventually published as Excel. I also got into doing Good Girl Art at this time, partly as a result of doing nude posters for a male exotic dancer and working at a very large sign shop located directly beneath the National Screen Service, supplier of all types of movie paper, including one-sheet posters, lobby cards, three-sheets and six-sheets, and so on. I once had a one-sheet for FANTASIA!

Bill: Can you trace the history of your Native American character Tanaka the Outcast, also known as Strong Bow? Why didn't this strip ever see print?

Ronn: Tanaka was the last character that I did before Fandom. I did about nine or ten stories, hand-colored. He's one of the characters I did the very most of. I liked the outdoors, I liked the Indian designs, everything about them except the test for manhood. I've always felt a kinship with Native Americans. I would've made a good Indian. My kids and I once built a ten to twelve foot tall teepee, eight feet in diameter. Amazing how fast it can go up, just a couple of hours, from scratch. We slept in it that same night. I sympathize very strongly with Native Americans, and am ashamed how we European Americans treated Indians, Orientals, blacks... anybody with even the least difference. To this day, I still play around with Indian types.

When I was in Arabia, a roommate had grown up in New Mexico, a Navaho Indian, and taught me about the sling they used to hurl a stone tremendous distances, two or three hundred yards. Two long slender leather straps about three feet long. We used to practice with these things out in the desert. I imagine this was the type of sling David used to slay Goliath.

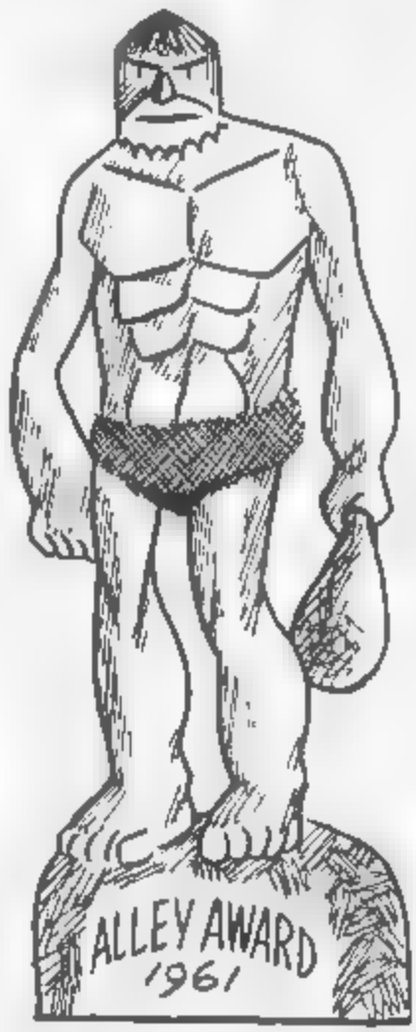
Bill: How was it that you ended up becoming Editor of ALTER EGO with the 5th issue?

Ronn: Grass and I did the cover for ALTER EGO #4. And, as Grass can verify, I've always been a craftsy type, working with metal, wood, leather, clay, plaster and paint. I carved the seven-inch redwood Alley (Oop) Award trophy figure and made plaster castings from it. I painted six each silver and gold -- silver for the amateurs and gold for the pros -- and sent them to Jerry. Packed them very carefully, I thought, in toilet paper and egg cartons Somehow, Gardner Fox's arrived broken in pieces, and he had to glue it together with epoxy.

Being the hyper-enthusiastic type I am, writing very long hand-written letters profusely illustrated, Jerry was frankly impressed with my enthusiasm, interest and energy. Somewhere he said something to the effect that it almost takes an artist to be an editor, to know how to make the most out of the overall appearance of a fanzine. Jerry asked me to continue publishing THE COMICOLLECTOR and ALTER EGO, when he wanted to concentrate on THE COMIC READER. By the way, I still have the original redwood carving I made the Alley Award castings from.

Bill: Had you met Jerry yet?

Ronn: No, this was all done through the mails. Jerry had originated THE COMICOLLECTOR because the ads were beginning to crowd the articles out of ALTER EGO. [Referring to a stack of fanzines.] Let's see... CC #1 was dated September 1961. I took it over a year later, publishing #7 through #12 ... which was the September/October 1963 issue



Drawing by Ross of the Alley Award statuette, which stood 8" high, carved from Redwood. Twelve statuettes were cast in plaster: six painted gold for the pros, and six painted silver for the fans The Award was depicted full-size on the cover of ALTER EGO #4

MW= MAIL WORK

HI- INTRODUCTIONS SHOULDN'T BE NECESSARY, SO I'LL GET RIGHT TO MY POINT! THE STORY YOU'VE JUST READ WAS MY FIRST FOP, (FOUR FRAMES PER PAGE) AND I CAN ASSURE YOU NOW THAT IT DEFINITELY WON'T BE MY LAST!!

FOP IS A SORT OF 'PROVING GROUND' FOR M.W. MAT., OR, A MEDIUM TO ADAPT TO STANDARD 'PRO' SIZE, WHICH IS ABOUT 12" BY 8"! THE TIME HAS COME FOR REFCO TO THINK SERIOUSLY OF THE FUTURE, AND OF SELLING!!

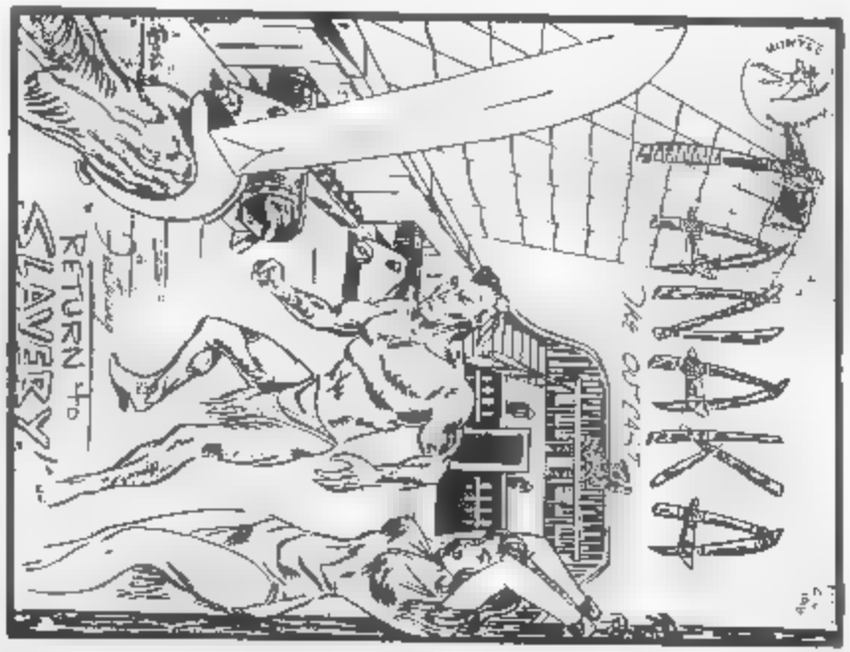
F.N.O., (UNLESS SOMETHING HAS CHANGED BETWEEN NOW AND THE TIME YOU SEE THIS) TAN'S NAME WILL BECOME *STRANG BOW*, WHICH NEWS STAND WILL COVER MORE THOUROUGHLY! I PLAN TO MAKE HIM 'A-1', MY GREATEST!!

HOWEVER, NOT TO FORGET C.F.'S, I'LL ALWAYS CONTINUE ON THEM.. PROBABLY MAINLY *STEEL MAN, THE GHOST*, AND A COUPLE OTHERS! I DIDN'T INCLUDE THE *BOA*, 'CAUSE I DON'T CONSIDER THEM 'REGULAR' C.F.'S! NATCH, I'LL NEVER STOP DRAWIN THEM!!!

STEEL MAN
GHOST
PANAMA
BROTHERS of ADVENTURE
Captain FOP

FNO= FROM NOW ON

CF= CRIME-FIGHTER



SILVER DALLAS, unpublished, 1961. This strip reflected Ron's interest in the American West, and along with Tanaka the Outcast, was one of the last strips he did before Fandom

Bill: ALTER EGO #5 saw the publication of the origin of The Eclipse, which really put you on the map as one of the premiere fan artists. The art was very tight and expressive, excellent in every way

Ronn: One of my favorites, too. It was my first inked strip published in photo offset, known as litho then Of course, it was an updating of Dr Mid-Nite. The writer, Druzy Moroz, was a prison guard, believe it or not.

Bill: How did The Eclipse come about?

Ronn: Dru Moroz and I had met through the mails, as most comic fans did at that time. Like myself, he had ambitions of breaking into the pro ranks, as a writer. We decided to collaborate on a hero with the intention of submitting him to one of the New York publishers. About six months before I assumed editorship of A-E, we had settled on a hero who was a mentalist ... normal except for his hyper-sensitive mind, whose powers were limited only by his ability to apply concentration. Then Dell beat us to the punch with Brain Boy Our hero was to have been DynaMan, and I still feel he'd have offered better sales potential.

In late 1962, adventure heroes were just getting re-established, so we decided on a revival attempt ... and settled on Dr. Mid-Nite. But Julie Schwartz told us that we could use neither the name nor the crescent moon which had been his symbol. This suited me fine, since I preferred modernizing the character anyway. Eventually we came up with name The Eclipse, which suggests victory over lawlessness. I redesigned the costume in all manner of variations ... adding appropriate symbolisms as he began to take on depth and significance. The strip was completed while I was living in California.

Bill: Both the origin and the follow-up in A-E #6, "The Mystery of Malimoor," were extremely popular.

Ronn: The origin won an Alley Award. It was extremely gratifying

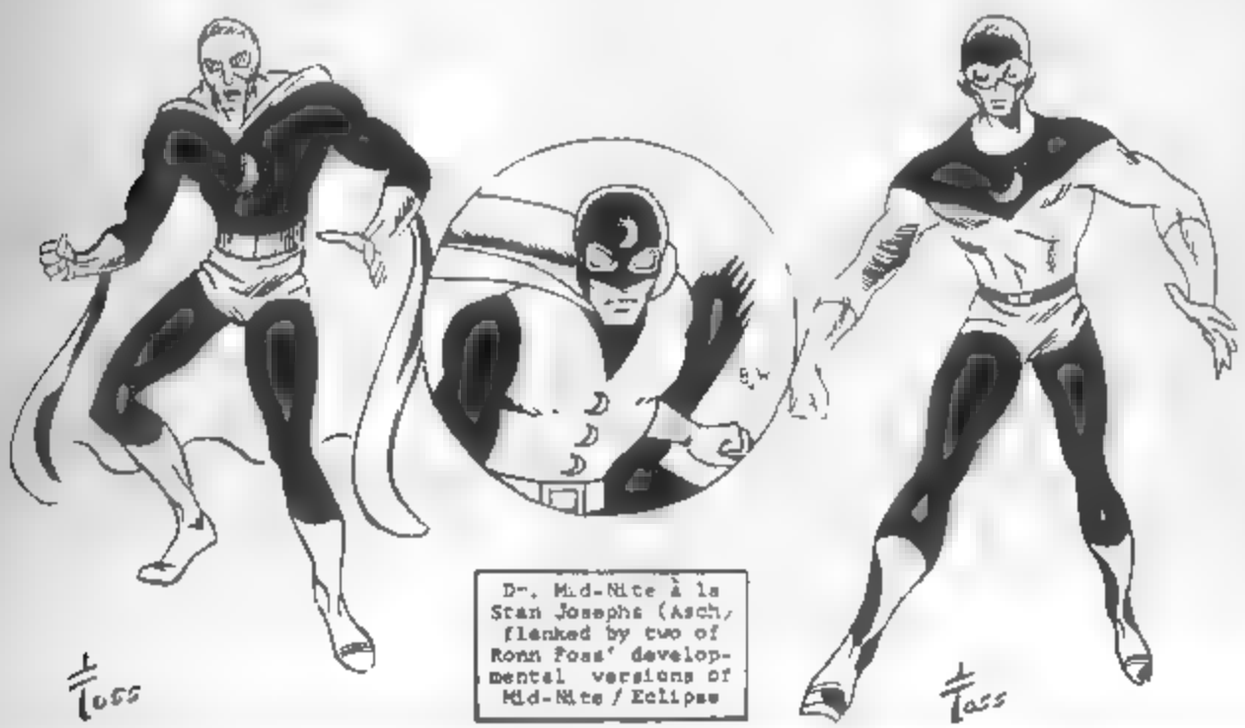
Bill: I also remember vividly how impressed I was with your introductory four page chapter to the Liberty Legion saga in STAR STUDDED COMICS #4, which was another early offset strip -- even though pages 2 and 3 were reversed due to a printing error.

Ronn: That was the second inked effort, though it may've been preceeded in print by "Return of the Nebula" with The Cowl in MASQUERADER #6, which was also from this period. That one was written by Mike Vosburg

Bill: Why did you give up the editing and publishing of A-E and CC?

Ronn: The circulation of THE COMICOLLECTOR got to be over 600, which was a lot for 1963. There had been plugs in FANTASTIC FOUR, MYSTERY IN SPACE and FANTASTIC MONSTERS, and it just took off

(Continued after the following strip...)



D-. Mid-Nite à la Stan Josephs (Asch, flanked by two of Ronn Foss' developmental versions of Mid-Nite / Eclipse

1963 Alley Award Winner!

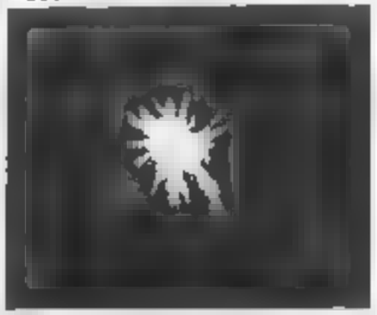
THE HUGE CLOCK ABOVE CRESCENT CITY TOWN HALL BOOMS OUT THE HOUR OF MIDNIGHT —
AND IN THE LABORATORY OF THE CITY'S FINEST HOSPITAL, GEROLOGY DR CRAIG PIERCE EYES THE MAN SITTING ACROSS THE ROOM FROM THE CHAIR TO WHICH HE HAS BEEN BOUND
HOW ABOUT IT, DOC —
BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG
AWW, C'MON NOW — YOU GONNA BE STUBBORN TOO? THAT'S WHY YOUR PAL IS LYIN' THERE... HE WAS STUBBORN
Y YOU KILLED DR HARRINGTON YOU MURDERED HIM IN COLD BLOOD! IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO, I'LL SEE THAT YOU PAY FOR THIS
HE TRIED T'CALL FOR HELP — I HAD T'SLUG HIM. HOW WAS I TO KNOW HE WAS A HEART PATIENT!
NOW LOOK SAWBONES — WE KNOW YOU HAVE RADIUM STORED HERE BUT THE SAFE IS TOO TOUGH TO BLOW SO YOU'RE GONNA TELL US WHAT THE COMBINATION IS!

THAT RADIUM IS FOR MEDICAL USES ONLY. IT'S NOT FOR PERSONAL PROFIT!
YOU KNOW YOU'D HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF IF YOU HADN'T COME BACK TO THE LAB TONIGHT - BUT YOU SAW US BUMP OFF THE OLD DOC, SO NOW... YOU GOTTA JOIN HIM:
SUDDENLY -
MMMMMM
LISTEN. THE ELEVATOR! SOMEBODY'S COMIN !!
THAT'S RIGHT SMART GUYS - IT'S THE PROTECTIVE AGENCY! THEY MAKE A CHECK EVERY FOUR HOURS!
THERE'S A FIRE ESCAPE JUST DOWN THE HALL HARRY- LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.
WAIT. WHAT ABOUT THE SAWBONES HE'S SEEN US - HE COULD IDENTIFY US TO THE COPS!"
A SMALL VIAL IS REMOVED FROM A SATCHEL —
THE DOC IS GONNA HAVE A LITTLE 'ACCIDENT'... THEY'LL THINK HE AND HIS PAL WERE KILLED IN A LAB EXPLOSION!
WORKING SWIFTLY -
THE FUSE IS ALL SET!
LIGHT IT AND LET'S GET GOIN !

THEN—

BA-BOOM!

AND CRAIG PIERCE FINDS HIMSELF LOST IN NOTHINGNESS



DAYS LATER IN A WARD—

.. SO, THOSE ARE THE FACTS, CRAIG — THAT LAB EXPLOSION FROM WHICH YOU SO MIRACULOUSLY ESCAPED HAS GIVEN YOU ALL THE SYMPTOMS OF *EXTREME CHRONIC PHOTOTONUS!!*

CHRONIC LIGHT SENSITIVITY, IN OTHER WORDS! DOES THIS MEAN.. I'M TO BE TOTALLY BLIND — FOR GOOD?

I- I'M AFRAID SO, CRAIG... NOT ONLY BLIND, BUT ALSO VERY ALLERGIC TO STRONG LIGHT! PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO EVEN A LITTLE LIGHT WILL CAUSE YOU GREAT PAIN — LARGER CONSENTRATIONS, POSSIBLY EVEN DEATH!

MEDICAL HISTORY IS FULL OF THIS TYPE OF AFFLICTION — THE EXACT NATURE OF IT IS, AS YET, UNKNOWN... BUT IT'S BELIEVED TO BE CAUSED BY A DEFICIENCY IN CERTAIN VITAL BODY CHEMICALS.. MOST WHO HAVE IT WERE BORN WITH IT! A FEW HAVE CONTRACTED IT IN LATER LIFE, BUT YOURS IS THE FIRST CASE WHERE IT WAS ACTUALLY INSTILLED!

THERE IS — NO KNOWN CURE, CRAIG... ONLY HOPE!

YES, THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE... EXCEPT FOR THE HOPELESS!

4

DISCHARGED FROM THE HOSPITAL, HOWEVER, CRAIG IS SOON TO DISCOVER THAT HIS CONDITION IS FAR FROM A COMPLETE LABILITY -

IT-IT'S INCREDIBLE! BY LIGHT OF DAY, I'M TOTALLY BLIND - BUT IN DARKNESS.. I-I CAN SEE PERFECTLY! I CAN EVEN READ THE FINE PRINT IN THIS BOOK!!

IN THE NIGHTS THAT FOLLOW, CRAIG ENTERS IN HIS JOURNAL -

Hail welcome creature of the night darkness binds me in possession of a new and unusual power source no

Yesterday for example, I found that..

OOPS - DROPPED MY PEN! HUH... M-MY HAND - PASSING RIGHT THROUGH THE TABLE!! HOW?

I conducted further tests, and found I could pass through any solid with the ease of a phantom —

I CAN ACTUALLY WILL MYSELF TO PASS THROUGH ANY SOLID... AND ANYTHING IN CONTACT WITH MY BODY PASSES THROUGH WITH EQUAL EASE!

. the molecules of my body seem to be under almost complete control of my will and by an expansion of my pulse-passing capabilities I can will my molecules to disperse and remain so wide apart that I am in effect invisible But, my powers are valid only under the influence of darkness - light in part cancels them out - completely.

THE HUMAN BODY IS THE GREATEST CHEMICAL FACTORY OF THEM ALL! EACH SEPERATE FUNCTION REQUIRES ITS OWN CHEMICAL COMPLEXES, BUT CHEMICALS CAN CAUSE STRANGE, UNACCOUNTABLE EFFECTS WHEN ACTED UPON BY OTHER CHEMICALS! I GUESS THIS IS WHAT MUST'VE HAPPENED TO ME!!

No one will ever know exactly which chemicals were in the lab when it blew but whatever they were they united with my body chemicals to create complexes so involved as to defy analysis. the direct result of these a change in the vibratory-rate of my molecular structure — hence my negative-matter talents.

...AND I HAVE DECIDED TO FOREGO MY EXPERIMENTS TO DEVELOPE A SERUM FOR MY 'LIGHT-ALLERGY'! I SHALL DEVOTE MY EFFORTS TO BECOMING A CRIMEFIGHTER OF SORTS!

TO AUGMENT HIS NEWFOUND POWERS, CRAIG DEVISES A NUMBER OF INGENIOUS INVENTIONS —

INFRA-RED GOGGLES GIVE ME NEARLY PERFECT DAYLIGHT VISION.. AS DR CRAIG PIERCE I CAN WEAR THEM AS SMOKED GLASSES' LATER, I MAY MINIATURIZE THEM TO CONTACT LENSES!!

Utilizing the principal of a laser beam which is but a single ray of light undispersed as in ordinary light I have developed a weapon which emits a pure opaque blackness...

THIS WILL ENABLE ME TO OPERATE AT PEAK EFFICENCY, WHILE MY ADVERSARIES WILL BE PLACED AT A DISADVANTAGE! I CAN ADJUST IT FOR USE ON AN INDIVIDUAL OR AN AREA, AND CONTROL ITS DURATION OF EXPOSURE!!

THEN CRAIG REVEALS HIS MOST ASTOUNDING INVENTION OF ALL...

THIS RESEMBLES AN ORDINARY BUSINESS SUIT, BUT THE FLESH COLORED ENVELOPE FITS ME LIKE A SECOND SKIN! IT'S POROUS FOR BREATHING AND PROTECTS MY LIGHT-SENSITIVE BODY FROM MOST NORMAL LIGHT —

— WHEN I OPEN THIS SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED BELT-BUCKLE, HOWEVER, EXPOSING THE PHOTO CELL BENEATH...

INCREDIBLY, THE CONTOURS OF THE 'BUSINESS SUIT' SEEM TO ALTER AND SHRINK — THE COLORS CHANGE AND —

... IT BECOMES A COSTUME COMPLETE WITH HOODED MASK AND GAUNTLETS! TO RESTORE IT TO ITS ORIGINAL FORM, I NEED ONLY REVERSE THE PROCESS, USING THE COSTUME BELT-BUCKLE!!

I SHALL BECOME CRIME'S ECLIPSE AND THAT'S WHAT I'LL CALL MYSELF — THE ECLIPSE! THOSE WHO WOULD DO EVIL WILL COME TO REGARD ME AS A SHADOW... AND ALWAYS WHEN A SHADOW MOVES, THEY WILL PAUSE AND LOOK BEHIND THEM — AND ONE DAY, I'LL BE THERE!!
SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER, AS THE CRESCENT CITY MUSEUM LIES DARKENED AND SILENT..
DID YOU GET THE REMBRANDT, HARRY?
YEAH — A COOL HUNDRED G'S WORTH OF PAINTING!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, THEN — WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE SEEN!
YEAH! THINGS HAVE BEEN HOT SINCE THAT SAWBONES LIVED AND BLABBED TO THE COPS!!
AS THE FLEEING PAIR NEAR THE GATES, A FIGURE SUDDENLY MATERIALIZES FROM THE SHADOWS —
THIS IS THE END OF THE ROAD FOR YOU TWO!
WHERE'D HE COME FROOOFF!
NEVER MIND WHERE I CAME FROM — IT'S WHERE YOU'RE GOING THAT MATTERS...

BEFORE THE BONE-JARRING ONSLAUGHT OF THE ECLIPSE, THE CRIMINALS BREAK AND RUN—
SCATTER, LUKE THAT GUY'S ALL FISTS!
BUT, AS THE PLUNDERING PAIR MAKE THEIR BID FOR FREEDOM—
NOW'S A GOOD TIME TO TEST THE OPAQUE RAY!
WHAT TH'— IT'S DARK AS PITCH ALL THE SUDDEN... I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING!!
THE MURKY BLACKNESS OF THE LASER BEAM MAKES ESCAPE DIFFICULT—
OMPH! THE FENCE!!
—IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE!
THE RAY IS STARTING TO DISPERSE.. GOT TO FINISH THIS QUICKLY!!
DEMORALIZED, THE PAIR ARE SUBDUED—
NOW AN OLD SCORE HAS BEEN RESOLVED, JUST AS— ER .. 'SOMEONE YOU ONCE MET' PROMISED IT WOULD BE! YOU'LL BOTH STAND TRIAL, AND PROBABLY PAY THE SUPREME PENALTY!

SHORTLY, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS—
HEY, SERGEANT... LOOK WHAT I FOUND ON THE STEPS OUTSIDE — LUKE GART AND HARRY BRENNER THEY'RE THE ONES WHO MURDERED THAT DOCTOR A COUPLE MONTHS AGO!!
P.D.
YEAH — AND WHOEVER LEFT 'EM SURE WORKED 'EM OVER... LOOK, THERE'S A CARD PINNED TO GART'S JACKET! LET ME HAVE IT!!
ON THE BACK IT READS: "YOU'LL BE HEARING MOR OF ME — SO WILL CRIME!" HOW ABOUT THAT?! HE DID WHAT THE ENTIRE FORCE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO! I HOPE HE WILL BE AROUND!!
The Eclipse
TAKE 'EM AWAY! I'M GOING TO CALL DR PIERCE. HE'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW WE — THAT IS THIS ECLIPSE CAUGHT THESE TWO!
IN HIS HOME, CRAIG RECEIVES A LATE CALLER—
. YOU DID BIT GOOD! BUT OF COURSE, WE BOTH KNEW IT WAS ALL A MATTER OF TIME — GART AND BREMMERS' DAYS WERE NUMBERED FROM THE MOMENT I LIVED THROUGH THE EXPLOSION! I'M SURE I CAN REST EASIER NOW... AND SO WILL DR HARRINGTON! GOODNIGHT SERGEANT — AND THANKS!

HANGING UP, CRAIG TURNS TO FACE HIS COMELY VISITOR —
NOW THEN, UH - YOUNG LADY? YOU WERE SAYING.. ?
DR PIERCE I KNOW YOU CAN'T SEE ME BUT MY NAME IS TERESA ASTER.. I'M THE NURSE WHO ATTENDED YOU AT THE HOSPITAL!
YES OF COURSE! I - ER.. SHOULD'VE RECOGNIZED YOUR VOICE" WELL, MISS ASTER, WHAT MAY I DO FOR YOU?
I MUST APOLOGIZE FOR THIS LATE HOUR, BUT I JUST GOT OFF DUTY! TOMORROW, I BEGIN MY NEW DUTIES ON BEHALF OF THE WELFARE BOARD - I'M TO BE YOUR PERSONAL NURSE!"
M-MY WHAT?
YOUR PERSONAL NURSE! I'M TO HELP YOU ADJUST TO YOUR .. YOUR NEW ENVIRONMENT - AND ACT AS YOUR RECEPTIONIST ON THE SIDE!!
BLINDNESS IS NO REAL HANDICAP, DR PIERCE, ONCE YOU LEARN TO COMPENSATE FOR IT!
WHAT A WAY TO BEGIN A NEW CAREER!
BY THE WAY - SHOULDN'T YOU BE IN BED? I MEAN... WELL, SURELY A MAN IN YOUR CONDITION - !
10
THE END

Note: "The Eclipse" (origin) by Drury Moroz and Ronn Foss occupies a unique place in the history of Comic Fandom. **It was the first amateur strip and character drawn in the professional manner (ink on bristol board) and printed photo offset.** In a later letter commenting on ALTER EGO #5, Jerry Bails wrote that he had been doubtful that "a tyro character" would be worth the expense of professional printing, though he applauded the strip when he finally saw it. "The Eclipse" firmly established Ronn Foss' reputation as one of Fandom's leading artists, and paved the way for fan acceptance of amateur heroes and strips in the expensive "litho" printing process, especially when they were of such high caliber. --- Bill Schelly

Trip Report

by Ronn P

I took a long, last look at Vallejo Calif as the Grey Dog pulled out. I'd lived in this area for nearly 6 years, and tho I'd come to appreciate the West Coast weather, I felt little remorse in heading back East. I say 'back' because I was born and raised in Ohio, spending my first 17 years there. My thoughts flew ahead of me as the bus rumbled into the night - I was anxiously looking forward to meeting some of the top names in Comic Fandom, which had been pre-arranged by mail.

Just a few days prior to leaving, I'd welcomed the visit of collectors Mickey Martin and Bill Birtcil from Sacramento, and Rudy Franke and Barry Bauman of Oakland. The 5 of us spent an enjoyable 6 - 8 hours comparing preferences in collecting, the pro comics, and assorted relative interests. We made a few trades before parting company, and in general were all re-enthused about continued correspondence.

I feel that these informal get-togethers strengthen relations and re-awaken the spirit of fan activity, therefore heartily recommend it to all whenever possible.

The Rocky Mts. hadn't even been crossed - a Bus Ride63 plunged into a snowstorm. I promptly reveled in it since it'd been years since I'd even seen the white stuff. However, I forgot all about it by the time Salt Lake City was reached, for it was here that I hoped to meet Pat Holman, editor of the fanzine SPOTLITE. As it turned out, we were behind schedule and could only spend a half hour here, whereas the usual stop is 1 to 1 & 1/2 hrs. Bless you, Alexander Graham Bell.. at least Pat & I were able to talk to each other for the 30 minutes - and at that, I had to interrupt our excited conversation when the departure announcement was made. (I still wonder what SLC coffee tastes like.)

Anticipation mounted as Missouri was reached. I'd been especially anxious to meet Biljo White, editor of the fabulous KOMIX ILLUSTRATED, ever since we began corresponding about Kirby & Wood's SKY MASTERS newspaper strip, and learned that each other was interested in becoming pro comic artists. I always held high regard for Bill's work, but never fully appreciated his capabilities until I'd actually seen much of his pro-intended art, gracing the walls of his White House of Comics. Biljo said he'd approached National's Mort Weisinger in 1953 with a sizeable stack of samples, including the original work on his unique FOO, with the hope of at least getting constructive criticism, if not some indication of interest on the part of the pros. The reply Bill was given reminds me of another answer to a hopeful writer's question. Q-"What color is the wallpaper?" A-"It's 3 o'clock." This obvious attempt to evade direct replies has been corroborated several times by correspondents with pro plans. Where do we stand? Only continued contact and sincerity with the pros may answer this. If I ever find out rest assured I'll pass it along.

Not only is Bill a fine comic artist, as evidenced by the popular [illegible] of the work in various zines, he is also a fine watercolor, and pastel artist as well. I was fascinated by a particular portrait he'd done of his beautiful wife, Ruthie. (For more info, see her write-up in ALTER EGO #5.) I was disappointed that Roy Thomas hadn't been able to get there at the same time I was as we'd planned, but we solved this later. As it was, I've never enjoyed myself so much as I did those 2 days spent with the Whites in Columbia, Mo. Bill & his wife are about the finest, most gracious people I've ever met, and tho he may send me a bomb for this, I advise anyone in their area to meet them. I had to fight the strongest urge to accept their proposal to stay with them a week until Jerry Bails and Roy would be there, but I knew there'd be another time, and felt I had to get on to Indianapolis to meet Ed Lahmann, who tallied the 1962 ALLEY AWARDS poll votes, and Jerry, who was stopping there on his way to Biljo's.

A phone call from Columbia to Arnold produced Roy's word to meet me in St. Louis, where he had planned on dating Joy Holiday. I reluctantly left the White's, yet we were already planning the next get-together, possibly at some form of Comicon in the immediate area.

In St. Louis, over pizzas, Roy, Joy & I got to know each other - albeit fen who've corresponded and worked together via the mails are hardly strangers. Although I'd passed thru St. Louis many times on cross-country trips (courtesy of Uncle Sam), I'd never really seen the city, so I was escorted around a bit. Most interesting to me was the night club quarter, all with an out-of-place-anywhere-else atmosphere, which reminded me of the Italian, Spanish, and French night spots in San Francisco's North Beach area - the equivalent of New York's Greenwich Village. The pleasant evening was capped off by a visit to Roy's apartment after leaving Joy to other things), where he showed me his full run of ALL STAR Comics - the ONLY thing lacking in Biljo's collection, tho with all he has he can do without it. I spent the night at Roy's, reading. Next morning, I was headed for Indianapolis.

I arrived at Ed Lahmann's just a hour or so ahead of Jerry. Ed possessed the same indefinable magnetism I'd found in Biljo and Roy - some wondrous aura of sincere exuberant personality, pure pleasure to meet and talk to.. I recall that a possible 'colony' of comic fen/collectors entered the discussion, not unlike conventionally accepted artists colonies. At any rate, I'm quite sure a comicon is inevitable, and bound to be an occurrence to remember.

Ed's collection consisted of just around 2-300, yet are all choice items. He explained that he'd traded long' (many for just one) to get his wants, and naturally had gotten what he sought. I wasn't surprised to find that Ed too was quite a artist in his own right, since he'd sent many worthy articles accompanied by especially good art. In his home were several colored pencil portraits, and a couple interesting figure studies done from classical themes.

Jerry showed us his nearing-completion DC Index, which will be an immeasurable aid to collecting, and is to sport surprise covers. He also had with him first color run offs of the Flash/JSA/Vandal Savage issue, and Ator Hawkman. Ed & I expressed regret that the HAWK was still getting the run-around, tho we all agreed that at least <u>some</u> exposure of HAWKMAN is better than none at all.

The second day at Ed's we got down to business, that of going over the tally of the '62 ALLEY AWARDS. There were very close tabulations - minute percentages to cross-check, and final decisions as to when the results could be made public. (See ALTER EGO, page 2?). All the while, we analyzed basic comic history, current trend, and speculated on forthcoming possibilities. Much of our conversation was taped by Jerry which was played back when he visited Biljo.

From Biljo - "It was a real treat for us 3 Musketeers of Fandom to escort Joy Holiday to a night out of grand eating and dancing. Really, when I first got mixed up in zines and fandom I never dreamed I'd meet so many great people from such far-off places. It's been tremendous! Jerry played back some tapes of your conversation at Ed's, so I feel I was 'just a little bit' there also. A short time after Jerry & Roy left, another fan from Bellevue, Nebr. (near Omaha) arrived - he'd heard about the blast down Columbia way. His name was Chuck Moss, whom I've corresponded with."

Foss:

Though I'd had publishing in my veins since writing a 'Neighborhood News' sheet in 1951, I found the demands of bi-monthly publication of 24 to 68 pages and the ever-increasing work on ALTER EGO taking too much time and energy from drawing. I remember one day my mailbox was stuffed with 53 items! So I turned the zines over to Roy Thomas and Biljo White, both then located in Missouri. As you know, before long G. B. Love took over publishing CC as ROCKET'S BLAST-COMICOLLECTOR, and it lasted well into the '70's.

Bill: Who were the first fans you met in person?

Ronn: My earliest fan encounter was with Steve Perrin. I was a mail carrier wearing sunglasses against the California heat, and he drove up asking "Are you Ronn Foss?" I said, "No, I'm DOCTOR SOLAR," which began a long friendship and a couple of collaborations, as well as mutual involvement with the Society for Creative Anachronism later on.

My next contacts were visitors in 1962 while working on THE COMICOLLECTOR, members of the L.A. Science Fiction Society. Bruce Pelz, Dian Girard, Ted Johnston and Fred Patten, who supplied photos of themselves in costume for a masquerade at a previous WorldCon as Dr. Fate, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern and The Flash, as they appeared in the Justice Society Shortly thereafter came Bill Dubay, Rudi Franke, Barry Bauman and Marty Arbunich

Bill: So that's how you happened to do so much work for VOICE OF COMICDOM and their other zines. They later published some of your offbeat things like Jim 'Laser' Beam in Undercover and Solano the Brave. Was Solano an off-shoot of your original Indian character, Tanaka?

Ronn: Yes, I was doing the last Tanaka comic strip when the newspaper that I worked for in California switched from weekly to daily, and needed a lot of material to fill up all those pages. And they were having a bi-centennial celebration of the founding of Fairfield in Suisun County. So I researched the Suisun tribe that had originally lived there and did some artwork for a newspaper page. This led to Solano the Brave being submitted to Bill Dubay.

Bill: Your Trip Report which recounts your bus trip when you moved back to Ohio from Suisun, California in 1963, meeting Biljo White and Roy Thomas is a fascinating bit of Fandom history. Those early fan gatherings must have been a lot of fun.

Ronn: There was a time before Comics Fandom got organized when a handful of us traversed interstates just to get together and share the comraderie of being fans. Just a dozen or even half that reveling in being with others of like mind ... knowing in our heart of hearts that comic books were indeed an art form, something the Europeans knew long before us. We called these gatherings ConClaves, being pre-convention days, overnight meets of only five or six fans to swap titles and tales about the genre.

One of the really active fans then was Alex Almaraz of Chicago, who gathered small groups together in the tri-state area, people like Ross Kight, Chuck Moss, Don Glut, Keith Greene, Mike Vosburg, Don and Maggie Thompson, Bill Thailing, Jim Rossow, Bob Butts, Larry Raybourn, Mike Tuohey, Billy Placzek, Grass Green and I, culminating in a jaunt to Jerry Bails' near Detroit. Who'd have guessed that comicdom would become as huge as it is today.

Bill: I take it you are referring to the Alley Tally Party held at Jerry's house in March of 1964, chronicled in Mike Vosburg's article in MASQUERADER #6? [Reprinted in Richard Pryor's HEROES ILLUSTRATED #4.]

R F heading for the Gold Coast 1964 , via steps lettered

Glen Johnson, his wife and R F. (right , Arizona Indian Reservation (1964 .

Bill Spicer and R. F., looking at the D. Bruce Berry cover art for FANTASY ILLUSTRATED #6, the issue that presented "Black Phantom" by Perrin and Poss in 1966

Ronn: Yes I'd never been to a Science Fiction con, but having talked to Fred Patten and the others who had created su great costumes, I constructed a Rocketma outfit and appeared as such. Cat Yronwo has photos of me from the 1968's as Rocketman, and also Tarzan, which I've been trying to get back since she left t Ozark country ten years ago. I've got some nude photos of her that I think she like returned as well, but she hasn't responded to my letters

Bill: What were your impressions of Jer Ballb?

Ronn: I was about 23 when I first met Jerry, and he was closer to 30 at that time. And maybe because he had a background of academia, he was a Phd and college professor after all .. Jerry seemed to have something of a distance, aloofness. His laughter seemed slightl self-conscious compared to the rest of who were relatively younger and full of bubbling enthusiasm at that time. But was nonetheless fannish. He did get int a Phantom costume one Halloween

I recall Jerry being very enthusiastic about the idea of microfilming comic books, which I didn't like personally. Staring into a screen black and white reproductions of the colorful paper you could hold in your hands. Although I see its point, to preserve those old collectibles

Despite his support to me in my wor we were never close like some fans can come to be, quite rapidly, just because mutual interests. His plans and goals aims seemed always to move on to the nex step. The only trade we ever made was a copy of Stan Lee's <u>How to Write for Comics</u> which I had. Jerry wanted it pretty bad, and finally he got it

Bill: Who was Joy Holiday?

Ronn: Joy was the mascot I created for THE COMICOLLECTOR to provide a female counterbalance to my own male presence, editor, when Myra moved on. She was new a Joy Holiday, though indirectly an inspiration. A costume was made and thr or four different women wore it, one of them being my sister Beverly, as in the photograph with my Batmobile.

There's a cute story involving Joy. While visiting Cleveland, Alex suggested Joy talk to Sherman and Wayne Howard, wh published a fanzine called ACTION HERO. They had phoned to speak with me. The young guys, in their early teens at the time, were honestly flabbergasted to actually hear her speak with them! She course put on her sweetest, most fannish attitude and encouraged them to draw

Conclave '64 (L to R) Don Glut, Bob Butts, Larry Reybourne, Dick Anderson, Alex Almaraz, Jerry Bails, Jim Rosnow (looking at Alex), Keith Greene Kneeling: R. F. as Rocketman (note helmet) and Mike Touhey (Photo by Alex Almaraz)

"JOY"

Bill: You published ALTER EGO #6, your last issue, from Van Wert, Ohio...

Ronn: ...and DATELINE.COMICDOM #1 through 12 on a monthly basis, in '63 and '64. That's where I introduced Scott Storm, The Fox, as a serialized ditto strip

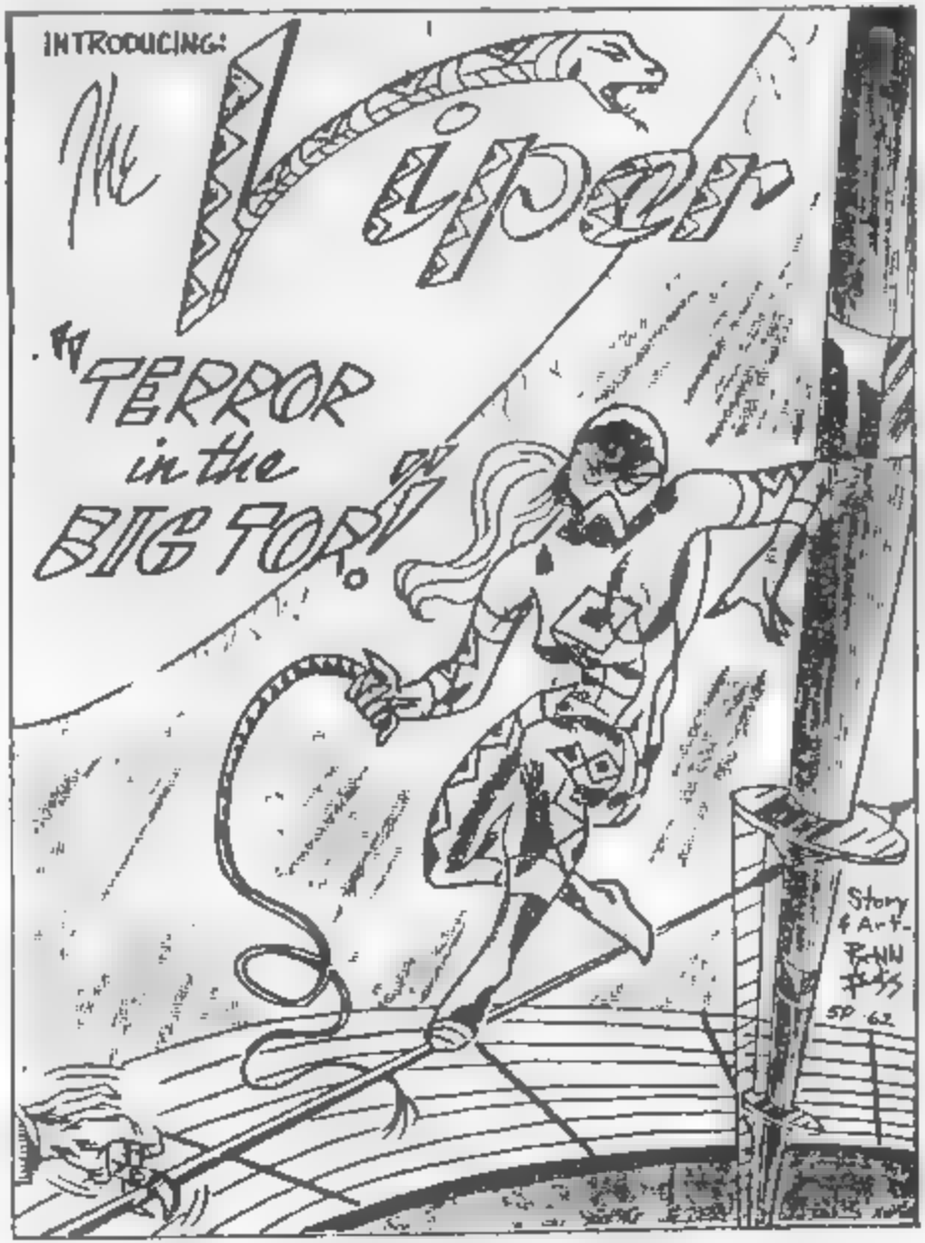
Bill: Didn't you quickly move back to California?

Ronn: In 1964, I headed back to the West Coast, settling in Santa Ana not far from John and Tom McGeehan, who I met a few times. On the way I visited the Texas Trio and filmed Larry Herndon, Buddy Saunders, Howard Keltner, L. L. Simpson and others, as well as Alex Almaraz and Joy Holiday. I drove my Batmobile, a '56 Olds Super 88 with a bat head on the grill. Visited Glen Johnson on an Indian reservation in New Mexico where he taught. Out in Southern California again, I met with Bill Spicer of FANTASY ILLUSTRATED and did Black Phantom for him, scripted by my old friend Steve Perrin.

Bill: Your movie a la James Bond called Undercover, starring Jim 'Laser' Beam, was fascinating to the uninformed. The strip version was very sexy stuff for the time. How did this come about?

Ronn: I was working as an ambulance attendant, and the driver brought a different girl in with him every other night for weeks We were 24 hours on, 24 off, so we had our own bedrooms. I proposed to make a film of it! I figured, nobody would believe this, even after seeing it! Since the girls wouldn't accept filming of themselves as-is, I wrote a scenario and did story boards for a 007-type movie. GOLDFINGER was then showing, so I gave the heavy a steel hand painted silver. Everyone liked the idea, so over the span of about three months, I shot a dozen girls and some heroic action, even going up in a helicopter for one

Joy Holiday (Beverly Adam, R F 's sister on Ronn s 'Batmob.le - note bat head on grill (1964)



KOMIX ILLUSTRATED #5, '62, ORIGIN

FIRST, TO TAKE MY HAIR DOWN! I'VE MADE THE OUTFIT FROM STRETCH NYLON SO IT'LL BE COMFORTABLE YET WEATHER RESISTANT!!
I'LL CARRY THE WHIP WE HAD MADE FROM THE SNAKE THAT... DAD WOULD BE PROUD!
THE TIP OF THE LASH IS COATED WITH DILUTED COBRA VENOM AND WILL CAUSE TEMPORARY PARALYSIS!
SNIFF!
MEANWHILE
THE MANAGING
AND

From the film "UNDER COVER"

I'D JUST FILED MY REPORT WITH DIVISION COMMAND AND WAS ABOUT TO ENJOY THE FRUIT OF MY LABORS—

AS WE EMBRACED I NOTICED A REFLECTION THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN IN THE MIRROR—

PULLING ELAINE DOWN I POINTED MY EXPERIMENTAL WEAPON ALLOWING FOR THE DEADLY SWEEP OF

AND SHE SCREAMED

THE ELECTRONIC RAY SLICED THROUGH THE DARKENED ROOM BURNING A PIN-HOLE IN THE FRENCH WINDOW THEN VAPORIZED THE VITAL ORGANS IN HIS THORACIC CAVITY—

AND SHE FAINTED—

I HADN'T YET BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO THE INCONCEIVABLE POWER OF THIS ONE-OF-A-KIND WEAPON. I COULDN'T FAINT SO I SETTLED FOR THE IMPORTED BRANDY

AND POURED THE HOSER OVER ELAINE

AS SHE STIRRED INTO CONSCIOUSNESS I—uh—

BUT I RECONSIDERED

From the pages of SGT. RAND THE BRAVE

THE BRANCH HOUSES AFLAME FIRST TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF IS CHIEF MALICA BLINDLY THE TRIBE FOLLOWS—

STOP! DON'T DO AWAY WITH YOURSELVES!!

YOU NOBLE PEOPLE DESERVE TO LIVE IN PEACE! WE WILL GO AND LEAVE YOU ALONE!!

THOUGH NOT UNDERSTANDING SANCHEZ' WORDS, THE INDIANS REALIZE THEY ARE STILL FREE BUT—

MANY OF OUR BROTHERS DIED— WE WILL HAVE REVENGE!!

MEANWHILE MILES AWAY— SEM-YETO LEADS A HUNTING PARTY

ALMOST SILENTLY, THE ARROW FLIES TRUE AND A GREAT STAG BUCKLES—

THE TRIBE WILL FEAST WELL THIS NIGHT

SHORTLY— I WILL GO ON AHEAD AND SEE

LOOK! A BIG FIRE AT YUI-YUI'S.

SEM-YETO YU-KE [illegible] WE WANT [illegible]

NO BROTHERS— NO MORE BLOODSHED MAKE PEACE

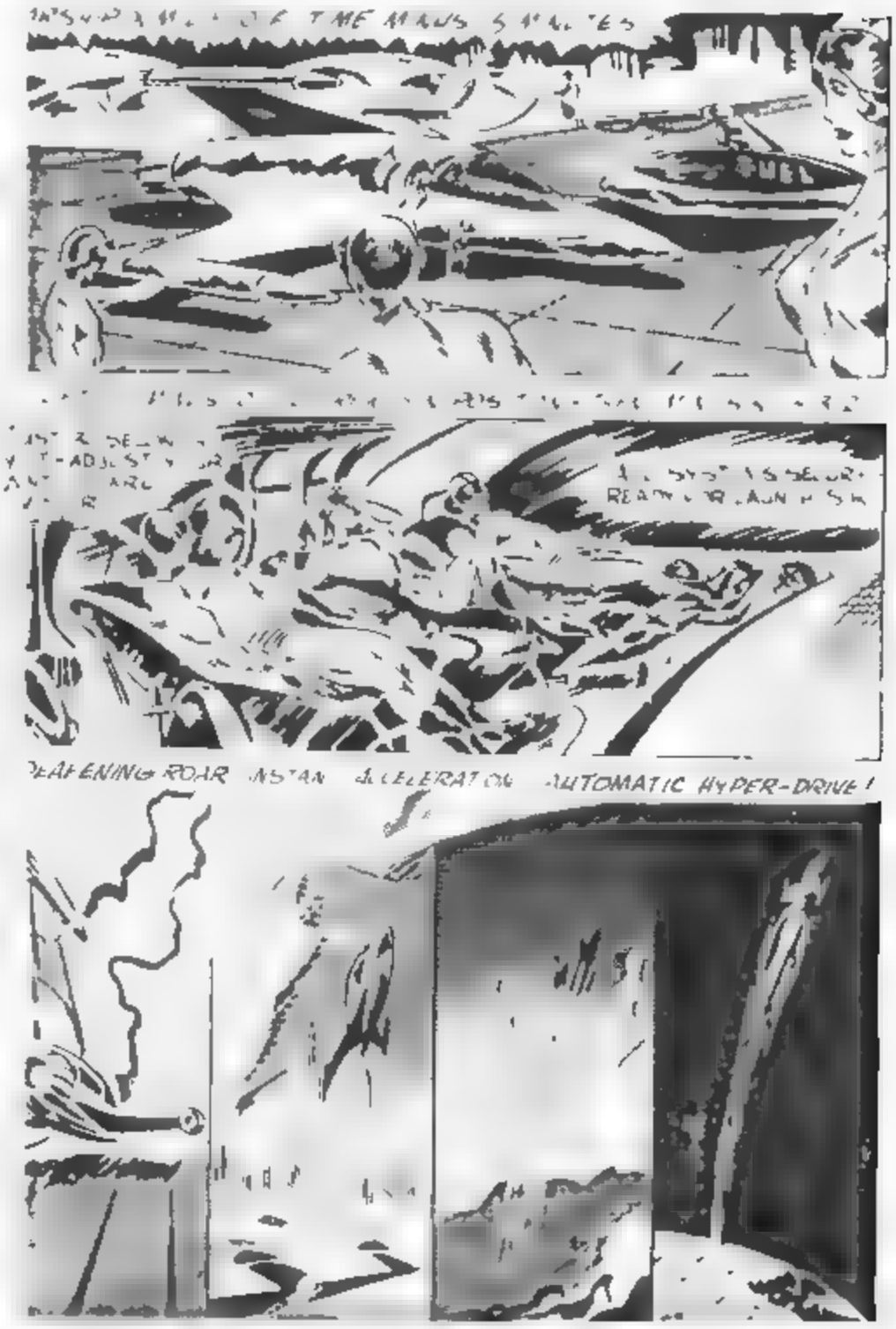
YES, PEACE . . YES, SEM-YETO! CHIEF SEM-YETO, CHIEF!!

I WILL PICK A WIFE, AFTER [illegible]

NEXT: [illegible]

PENDANT BATTLE WAR

Belle


FUEL
DEAFENING ROAR
INSTAN
ACCELERATION
AUTOMATIC HYPER-DRIVE!

DIMENSION MAN
Written and Illustrated by RON FOSS
IN THE 327TH FEMALE TO BE CALLED VELVET OF VENUS
WHY DID YOU WHAT EVER YOU DID TO ME?
Velvet

DIMENSION MAN from Fighting Hero Comics #12, "Velvet of Venus!", fourth and final episode, ditto, 1964. When D-Man asks: "Why a woman in space rather than a man?" Velvet replies: "Are you unaware of the history of Astarte from your own earth records? You see, we Venusians are migrants from earth - from a civilization aeons before your earliest ancestors. We've learned to survive on the second planet.... Of necessity, we quickly learned that women were superior to men as regards stability, mental capacity, adaptability, and even for sheer strength of endurance So, our males content themselves with manual labor; we females pioneer technology. If ever Earthians are able to overcome their Victorian reasoning and pseudo-social customs, perhaps you'll realize the advantages of a feminine culture in authority."

Interview:

scene. My gimmick was a laser pistol, thus called him Jim 'Laser' Beam in Undercover, or, Sex and the Secret Agent. Our heavy was 300 lbs., though a real teddybear of a friend who did a very convincing job. After completing the 8mm silent, with a tape-recorded soundtrack from Stan Kenton's City of Glass album, I began a comic strip based on the film, though only a single strip was published in VOICE OF COMICDOM in 1965. Years later, in 1972, I got a request to show Laser at a Texas comicon, and though I couldn't attend, I was later told that several adults took their kids out when the opening bedroom scene came on the screen.

Bill: Dubay and Arbunich also published one of your strips in ALL STARS #1, Belle Starr, First Woman In Space. She was one of the first memorable heroines created for Fandom ... doubtless appreciated by the few femfans of the day.

Ronn: I'd never heard of a Feminist Movement nor any such thing at the time, of course. This was 1965, when I was doing Jim 'Laser' Beam, after all. But there's even a stronger case for women in "Velvet of Venus," the fourth and last Dimension Man strip done in ditto for FIGHTING HERO COMICS #12 a year earlier. When D-man asks Velvet, "Why a woman in space rather than a man?" she answers to the effect that her people believed that women were superior to men in most ways (See excerpt.) Again, this was years before the Feminist Movement. It was just that I empathize strongly with females.

Bill: Following things chronologically, you didn't stay in California that long at this juncture, did you?

Ronn: In 1965, lots of loving letters from Coreen Casey took me back to my birthplace, Defiance, Ohio and my second marriage. Coreen Was an Illinois college girl who I had met through fandom, trading, mutual interests. We moved to Florida to paint signs with a brother-in-law. There I also did some snake hunting, catching them alive for their venom to make into anti-venom, heart and cancer treatments and so on. While I was in Florida, I met Margaret Gemignani, who co-edited MASK & CAPE with Steve Perrin.

Coreen is a writer. She assisted me on a lot of comics, beginning with The Fox in 1965, and The Eclipse. She wrote a sequel to Belle Starr, and a number of other things.

"The Lovers" - R. F. and Coreen Casey, Summer 1965 in Chicago around the time they were married. They met through fanmish correspondence. Photo by Alex Almaraz

Bill: There were a few vocal detractors of your 1960's work, saying it looked rushed or too loose. How would you respond to this?

Ronn: My techniques are a result of my own experimentation in the medium, as well as love for certain artists' work before me. One was Everett Raymond Kinstler, whose fluid, sketchy style on science fiction and westerns of the '40's and '50's was derived from people like Charles Dana Gibson, as in The Gibson Girl, around the turn of the century ... as well as James Montgomery Flagg and J. Allen St John of the Tarzan books.

Grass Green and I were also fans of Carmine Infantino's inking of his own work on Pow Wow Smith and Detective Champ, which was much freer and more dramatic than those strips he pencilled but were inked by others. Of course, Al Williamson's E.C. art had this same sketchiness that gave it an impact and tension others didn't have. And later there were guys like Mike Kaluta and Jeff Jones .. particularly his only issue of one of the many Flash Gordon incarnations. To me, such raw lines give the art a refreshing aliveness, compared to most other ultra-clean and polished -- and dead -- comics.

Bill: I always felt that one could always see what you were striving for, the essential image, even when you didn't spend a lot of time on details.

Ronn: As I said, I've always tried to explore various techniques to give my work a difference, which is not to say better but at least not the same as everyone else. Like anyone, I have my ups and downs, so there are naturally inconsistencies. I'm not a machine, functioning the same day after week after month after year. If that's what some want, wait until computers take over comics. I'm afraid that day may come sooner than later.

Chris Rock wrote that consistency is a hob-goblin, which I feel is true when it comes to art. It's desirable to maintain some degree of identifiable sameness . . Still, I believe boundaries should be constantly pushed beyond former limits. Otherwise, we'd still be rubbing mineral colors on cave walls like our Stone Age forefathers!

Looking back, it's apparent how my style has evolved. Some tight, some loose, some a combination of both. Ever-changing, as nature is. To me, it is either a growth process or stagnation.

Bill: As your symbol, you adopted the Red Fox. How did this trademark come about?

Foss: In Arabia, in the Air Force in 1957, I was in aircraft control, and had occasion to talk on the radio to pilots on incoming and outgoing aircraft. We were required to use the phonetic alphabet for our initials, which at the time for me was Romeo Foxtrot. And I simply had an affinity ... I liked the idea of a Fox, designed along the lines of the bat-head symbol on the old Batmobile -- very impressive. Where his was blue-black, a bat, I made mine red, because to me a fox looks best when it's red. About three or four years later, around 1961, my Dad went through one of the genealogical societies, and found out that the family name, the crest, happened to be a Red Fox. So from then on I just started using it. I carved up a rubber eraser, got a red stamp pad. And with five points, it even looks like some kind of law enforcement star insigne at first glance.

Bill: What happened to the much-hallyhooed "Warrior of Llarn" strip that was was to be adapted from the Gardner Fox book by Roy Thomas and drawn by you?

Ronn: I did a few drawings. Then I discovered that Roy was to get paid 48 percent of the total for the so-called impetus, and doing the breakdown of the book. And Fox and I were each to get about 38 percent. And we went around and around about this. Because a comic strip is a considerable labor, drawing after drawing, page after page. In my view, comic books are primarily an illustrative art form. They can be sold, can be enjoyed, without any dialogue whatsoever, just pictures like a silent movie. So I think writers, however good they may be, do not deserve anywhere near half of the grand total. So that's what stopped me on "Warrior." Roy wanted 48 percent and I was only to get 38 percent. No way, Jose Roy got Sam Grainger to follow up and it was published in STAR STUDDED COMICS.

Bill: You didn't stay in Florida long...

Ronn: There was a song around this time, "San Francisco" by Scott MacKenzie, which you probably remember. Well, we rapidly became turned on to alternate lifestyles, and so returned again to San Francisco. We moved there just in time to catch the end of the Summer of Love, a very interesting scene in many ways. I got a day job working for the U. S. Post Office as a training instructor and carrier. We linked up with Steve Perrin's involvement with the Society For Creative Anachronism, and I was able to explore my interest in that whole area, especially including archery.

Bill: What were some of the fannish projects you were involved in at this time?

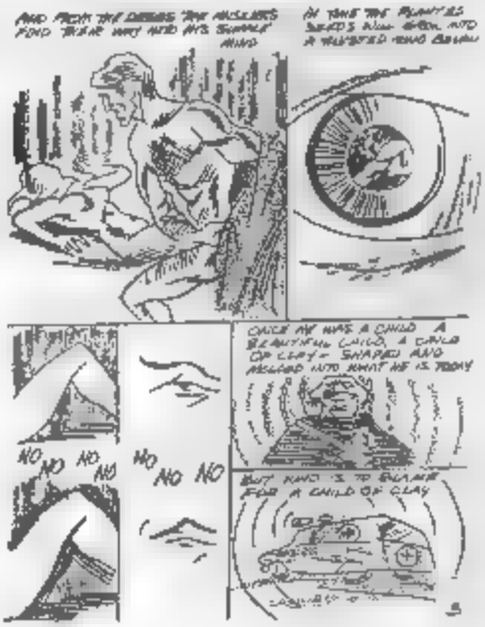
Ronn: We wrote The Sorceress and The Satyr, a 13 chapter serial, though only got to shoot one, which was later stolen, though I still have the original storyboards. We were also fans of Edgar Rice Burroughs, notably Science Fiction

Excel

IN THE ROUGH THOSE I CAN PROUD SERVE!

ZIT
GAS
SKREEE
ZIT
BEEP
BEEP
I'M CALLED XL!
AND YOU'LL BE EXCEL!
EXCEL FOILS ESCAPE

child of clay



NO NO NO NO NO NO
Lyrics © 1948 by Ernie Harpsca Inc.
My Heart by E Harpsca E J Curtiss
A E M Records
As done by Jimmy Rogers originally appeared on Cash Album #12 in 1948
by Ronn Hoge

and Sword and Sorcery, so I did numerous drawings of that type, including several published in AMRA around 1969, appearing with another idol of mine, Roy G. Krenkel, who I've always felt never got the attention he deserved.

I remember getting the first issue of WITZEND at a poster shop in Haight-Asbury, as well as ZAP #1, and sent my initial underground strip "Like It Is" to Bill Pearson in New York when he took over WITZEND. He expressed interest, but it was never published or returned.

Bill: "Child of Clay" was from this period, wasn't it?

Ronn: "Child of Clay" was probably my last ditto strip. It was an adaptation of the song Jimmy Rogers made popular in 1958. The strip first appeared in CAPA-alpha #43, May 1968, and then I re did it for SENSE OF WONDER. That song still brings tears to my eyes

We attended the 1968 BayCon, the Science Fiction WorldCon, and out of an awareness of ecological concerns, ended up publishing two issues of PANDORA, and then a newsletter called ISSUES.

Bill: How long were you a member of CAPA-alpha?

Ronn: I had been a member back near the beginning, with #2 at the end of 1964, and only stayed on through #11 in the summer of '65. After a hiatus, I joined again with #43 and stayed for ten issues, through February 1969.

Bill: Didn't you do some work for Marvel Comics?

Ronn: In 1968, Roy Thomas, who was then a Marvel editor, phoned to ask for some pencilled Valentines for his NOT BRAND ECCH #13. When I'd finished those, he suggested I try the upcoming Conan strip, which I began I was in the process of developing some preliminary drawings, and a first page, of my version of Conan, trying to stay away from the Frazetta image. While I was working on it, Roy called me back to say they'd hired an English kid named Barry Smith who would work for half the rate, which I wouldn't. At the time, creators had very little control over their own works, which could be all but ruined by uninspired inkers or cut by non-artist editors or otherwise diluted in the process of mass publishing. I'd always been a rebel to status-quo systems, so I felt I had to go my own way, whatever that amounted to or not. What little I had developed on Conan was inked by Sam dela Rosa, I think, and published later in FANTASY CROSSROADS.

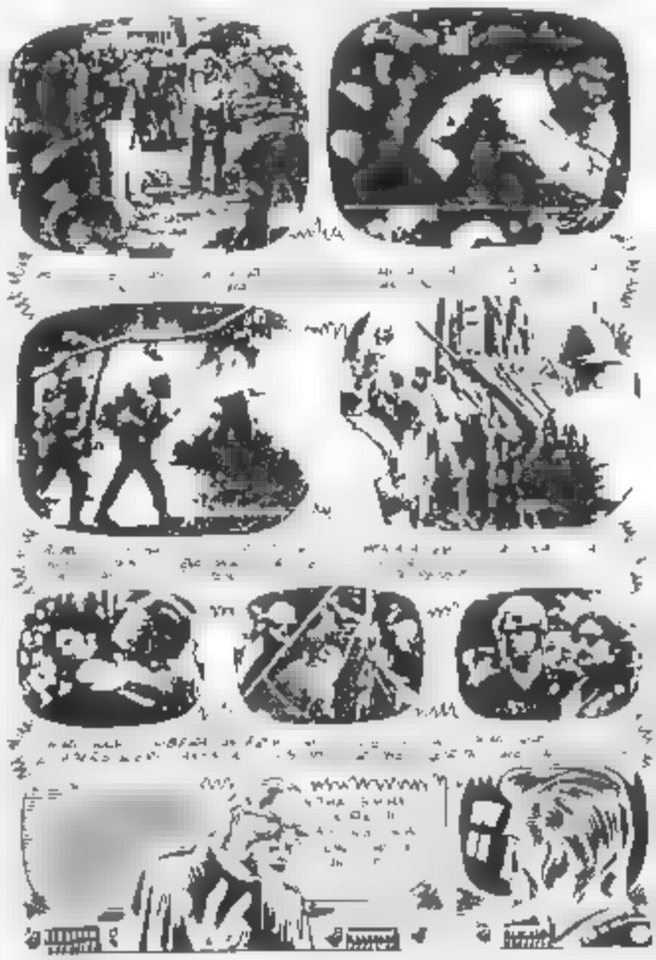
Bill: What was it like trying to break into the prow at this point in time?

Ronn: DC and Marvel were, by turns, distant, condescending and non-responsive to fan artists in the '60's and '70's . with the exception of Roy, who blew hot and cold. Joe Orlando wrote me saying "Relevancy is dead!" That's what tore it, for me, in 1971. Wanting to get out of the city, Corsen and I moved back to Ft Wayne. I got a job working for National Mill Supply in shipping and receiving. We re-linked up with Grass, who I urged to try the underground comix market. He did, and sold. I didn't, until much later though I scripted one of his strips in GOOD JIVE #1.

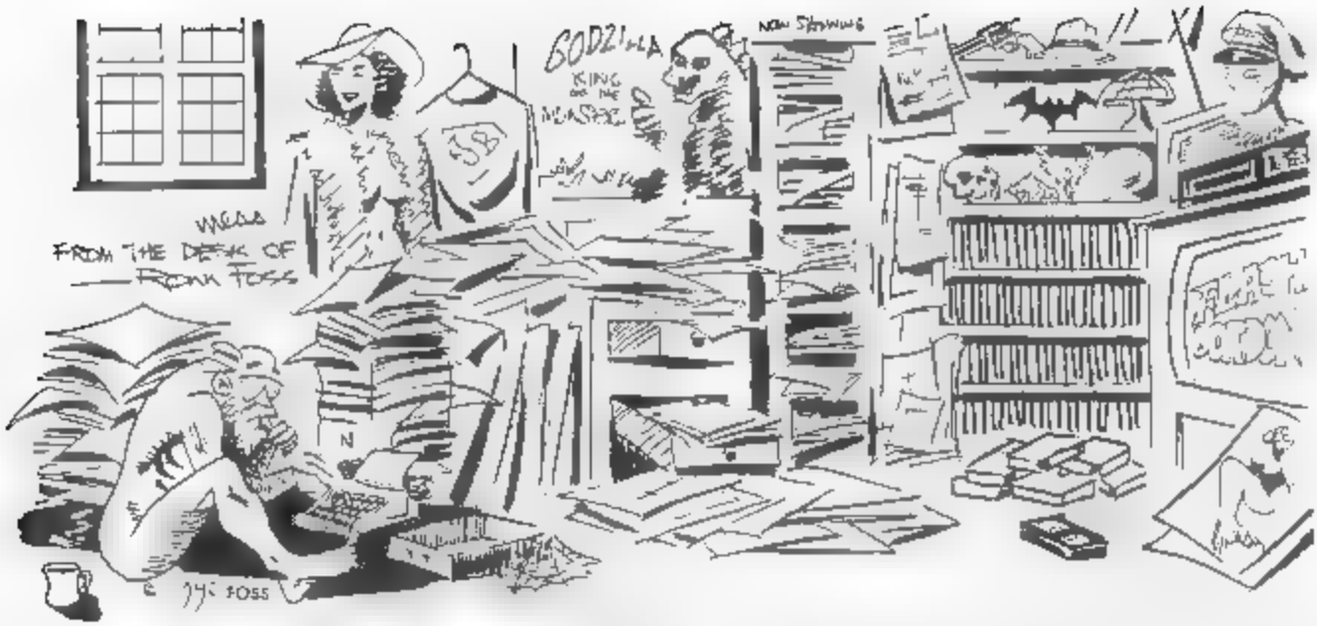
It was during this time that Alex Almaraz from Chicago made a lot of trips to visit, bringing along his Flash Gordon 16mm sound movies. And since my children Dawn and Scott, at that time ages four and three, loved movies just like I do, they really got into early Flash Gordon serials

Bill: We seem to have come to the end of your first decade in Fandom, when you did most of your costumed hero work: Eclipse, Black Phantom, Dimension Man, The Highwayman, The Viper, The Fox and so on. Do you have one particular favorite?

Ronn: Excel was my personal favorite character, despite the lack of fan acceptance, which I attribute to the fact that he was an anti-hero. In the third ten page story, he never even appears in



EXCEL from Star Studded Comics #17, "Excel VS Siren " 1969. R. F. introduced relevancy to the fan comic strip, using photos from the San Francisco newspapers to bring a jarring immediacy to Excel's second appearance TV screen with news reports pre-figured Chaykin's AMERICAN FLAGG and work by Frank Miller



costume, though he uses a laser zap to barbecue two FBI agents who kill the girl who turned him on to nature! I scripted a fourth ten pager called "On Trial." The splash was him facing the judge, and most of the story was a debate about crime and punishment Remember, these were the Nixon years. I've always wondered if Ditko's MR. A was a polarized reply from X-L, being of the extreme Right while I was on the Left.

Excel was a precursor to Robocop, the Terminator, Deathlok and was an inspiration for all the TV-screen panels in AMERICAN FLAGG. I'd like to have done lots more with X-L, having barely developed the basis in the first twenty-two pages, which would amount to a single issue of a comicbook.

Bill: You really ended your costumed hero period for all intents and purposes at this point...

Ronn: Well, the last hero-type strip I completed was The Eclipse in 1976.

Bill: Why?

Ronn: I've been turned off doing super heroes, more or less, after that first decade, though I still like them in moderation. There are far too many other genres for me to concentrate on any single one. My diverse interests are part of the reason I never pursued mainstream comics. I'm too much the free-form person to limit myself artistically, as well as in life. While I'll always have a love for comics art, my passions have expanded widely to include many visual media

Bill: For those of us in Comics Fandom, it seemed like you just kind of disappeared. But by the early 1970's, the amateur zines themselves were being replaced by 'pro-zines' full of art by Frazetta, Williamson and others. You basically dropped out of Fandom, right?

Ronn: I was working as a water treatment technition for Central SOYA. It was then that I learned first hand, hands-on, just how bad the globe's water was becoming And out of this concern came the impetus for ISSUES, which was an outgrowth of PANDORA. #1 was dated April 1971, when we

ODZ'N'ENZ © 1990 FOSS
HOWNA HELL CAN I EXPECT TO GET ANY-THING DONE WITH ALL THE DISTRACTION-
OH-THAT IS THE WORK!
LUCKY ME!
7-22
ROBBER STAMPS COMMISSIONED

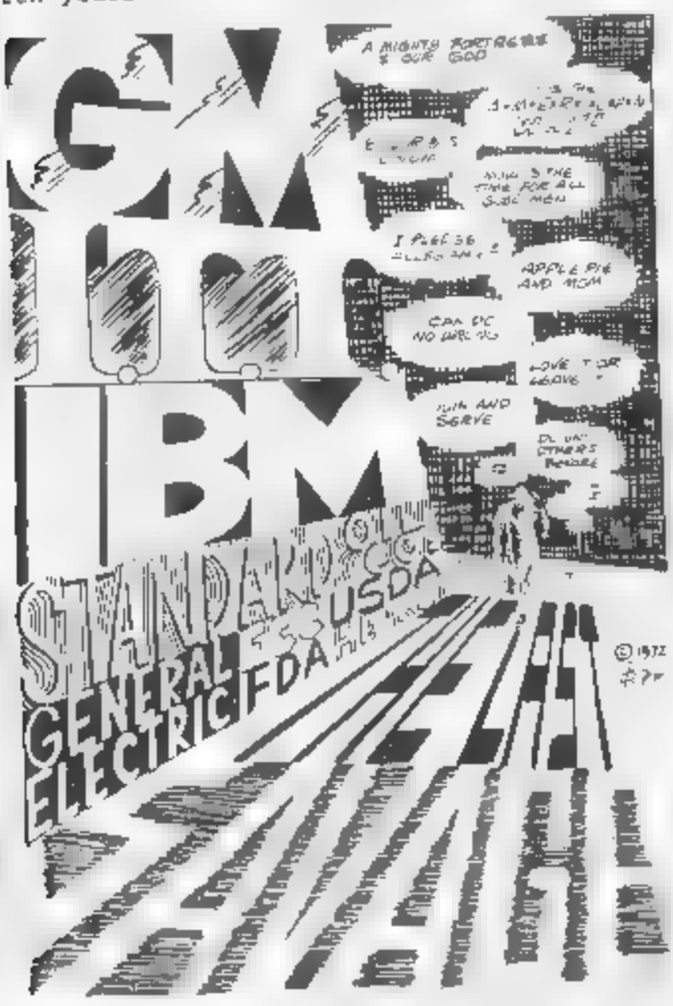
were still in California. A lot of fans were becoming ecologically aware at that point, and there didn't seem to be any fannish type of discussion on it. So I began what I first called THE ISSUE, and it grew to be ISSUES, which I continued when we moved back east in 1971 through 1974. It consisted mainly of letters, reports, excerpts, and articles dealing with environmentalism. #9, the last issue, is dated September 1974, which is just about the time we purchased twenty acres in the Ozarks, which was Spring of 1975.

Bill: How did you happen to choose the Ozarks?

Ronn: We started reading the Mother Earth News, and looked into various situations, such as the original Rainbow Tribe, a commune in Oregon . . but their prerequisite of donating everything to the commune was too much for us at the time. Finally, a letter from Cat Yronwode suggested we try to the Ozarks. I've been here since, finding the solitude I sought and increasing mail orders for customized artworks in the process.

Bill: Your second marriage ended about this time, didn't it

Ronn: That's right. Our marriage lasted ten years almost to the day. Coreen was a



TERESA ASTER from The Eclipse ©1982

wonderful wife, but we came to a parting of the ways, when I relished this rustic woods ... and she has since gone on to become no less than a nuclear physicist!

Bill: Amazing!

Ronn: What's really mind blowing was the fact that it was really Coreen who was so ecologically aware, and kindled my interest in getting back to the land.

Bill: What's the appeal of the backwoods lifestyle, for you?

Ronn: I've always simply enjoyed nature, like Thoreau ... since my childhood on farms. I enjoy swinging an axe and picking berries. My little patch of woods

harbors deer, wild turkey, fox, 'possum, 'coon, skunk, rabbit, squirrel, snakes and birds of all feathers.

I've discussed this with many who think I have it hard, living without lots of conveniences and creature comforts, while to me the nine-to-five is the hard way to live. I make do with lots less, but my time is my own from moment to moment, which is most important to me. In the thirty-five years preceeding this backwoods life, my senses were assaulted by all the sounds, speed and sights of the city. While some people enjoy the pace, my metabolism is much slower.

If it sounds like a dream life, I hasten to add it's only my dream ... being also very rustic, raw and rugged, too much so for most women to last more than six months here unless they were raised in this lifestyle. First year here, I even lived with candles and kerosene light, a delight to this night person, though I missed the electric to power my movie projector and for music.

When winter gets serious, I'll have to chop ice for doing dishes and bathing, but I can skate on my road at leisure and marvel at the diamond-covered limbs of trees or acres of blue-white snow, lit by the moon... virgin except for bird tracks and animal prints. It's both invigorating as well as back-breaking to cut, split and stack wood... It's heaven and it's hell.

Bill: You call your art-for-hire business Artist X-Press. What type of artwork does this involve?

Ronn: Most of the initial commissions were for hero-types, and then I began to get requests for adult art, and these were more often repeat orders. Thus my CBC ads over the years have gone from offering 'original art' to 'personalized exclusive' to 'erotic action.' The past two years I've had few clients for other than adult art, though one regular customer gets sports scenes and other things as well.

Some of my regular customers include a cop, a lawyer, a retired businessman, an astronomer, a NASA computer operator, a female painter, a college student who inks my pencils, a social services rep and many others across the country.

Bill: Have you kept in touch with anyone from those early days of Comics Fandom?

Ronn: All along I've had continued input and feedback from another of Fandom's founders, Mike Vosburg. He and Grass have been my closest friends since the early days. I hear from them every month or two.

Bill: Do you still have much of a comic book collection?

Ronn: Most all my comic collection, what was left of it, was stolen in 1987.

Bill: How did that happen?

Ronn: I had been working and living in West Plains [Missouri] while working for Russ Cochran for the better part of two years. I was opaquing negatives for his PIRACY, VALOR and PSYCHOANALYSIS reprint editions, and working in shipping and receiving. I would return to my little farm about one weekend a month just to revitalize myself.

When I arrived home for a visit one time, I discovered the front door was literally smashed in pieces on its hinges. Two walls of floor-to-ceiling bookshelves had been overturned in my front living room, although none of the books stolen I doubt the thieves were readers, as I am My collection of one hundred and fifty records were all gone. Photographs were scattered all over the place, as well as 2,500 name and address index cards.

The worse treatment was in my den. Again, two walls of floor-to-ceiling books and mostly old material -- drawings, stories, letters -- had been dumped. It looked like someone had made a very thorough search. My den was literally knee-deep, totally trashed. Windows broken out of pure vandalism.

Stuff that was stolen was really not worth that much My personal collection of movies, an out-of-print book of ERB illustrations ... my comic collection, probably only worth two or three thousand dollars. But they couldn't just take what was of obvious value ... they just tried to maliciously destroy things. But then, these are the Ozarks, and some of these redneck cowboys down here will do just about anything. I mean, kill relatives, you name it. It's pretty wild.

Bill: That kind of thing is really every fan's nightmare. So much of what we have, and value, is so fragile... and so hard to replace

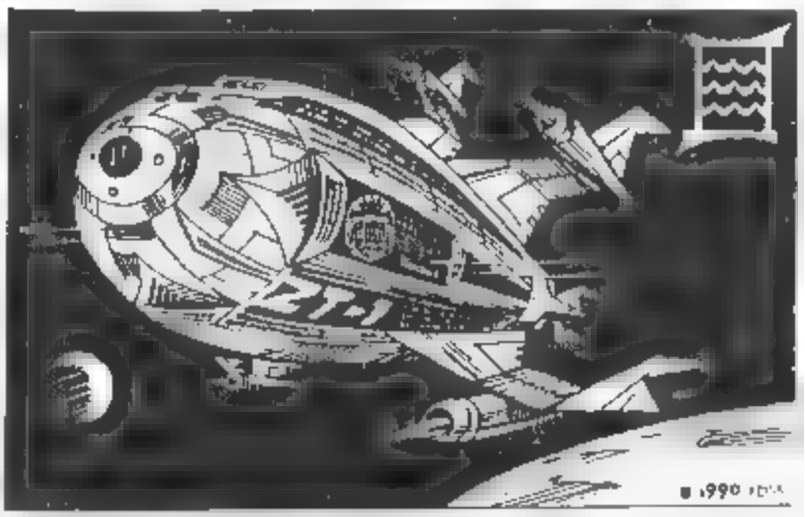
Ronn: It was sickening. I just felt empty. Because there was the better part of thirty years dumped on the floor like a garbage trash heap

After the theft of my comics and related magazines, I decided to focus on building a video library of favorite films, such as those starring Valentino, Chaplin, Keaton, Bogie, Lorre, Cagney, Mitchum, though primarily science fiction and fantasy. Also, Ernie Kovacs, Steve Allen, many others On the female side, Garbo, Hedy Lamarr, Faith Domergue, Ida Lupino, Barbara Rush, Phyllis Kirk, Helena Carter and others. I don't get to theaters any more, preferring to rent videos, so I rarely see recent releases

Ballistics is another of my many interests. Target shooting, rather than hunting, including archery and experimenting with slings and spears, an outgrowth of my fascination with the medieval age.

Bill: How did your interest in astrology develop?

Ronn: Coreen had studied astrology and palmistry for about ten years, and I discounted it up until about I was about thirty-five years old. I thought it was so much hokum ... until I saw her do a palm reading for a woman who quickly ran from her crying, and I asked the woman why she was so upset, and she said, "She saw in my hand that I was about to die, and no one else knows this except me and my doctor!" So there is more than meets the eye to all that.



Commissioned Cassette Tape art done for Ocean, the Led Zeppelin Fan Club

So thanks to her, and others, I got more and more interested, and found how well it works in just my personal daily relationships with others, despite intentionally going against astrology and genuinely trying to have intimate relationships with women who are polarized opposites of mine. They just don't work. While those who are akin to mine, Cancer, are generally very satisfying.

Bill: What kind of work pattern do you follow when you're drawing?

Ronn: As I said, I'm a night person so I'm frequently up until 3:00 or 4:00 a.m , and seem to get my best work done after dark. I often play music while drawing, most notably 1950's jazz, Kraftwerk, Chuck Mangioni, Mancini . primarily instrumental.

Bill: In addition to your Artist X-Press business, what else have you been up to since you went "back to the land" in the mid seventies?

Ronn: I've been fortunate in doing a wide variety of interesting works, including editing and publishing the monthly YOUR TIMES X-PRESS from 1975 through 1983, over 100 issues, mostly mimeo and some offset, which at its peak reached 1,000 coast to coast. It started a newsletter to help communications among the scattered folk in this area, and ended up reaching a lot of other people interested in the backwoods lifestyle.

Early in 1976, Chris Rock, who'd just started work for Russ Cochran 35 miles away, visited and we became close friends, filming together and meeting with Cat Yronwode who lived nearby and a few other local comics enthusiasts, forming the Society for the Appreciation of Graphic Arts, or SAGA

Bill: Given the high sexual quotient that your work has generally had, are you aware of the current proliferation of sexually

explicit comics? Have you considered contributing to these magazines?

Ronn: I am, and have long been, well aware of the many Good Girl comics put out by Eros and others. And this is why I have had work published in four different issues of RIP OFF COMIX, as well as half of Grass Green's SINNIN' #1, "Hobo Hal" pencils. However, the work I'm doing for private collectors has most of my time taken up, whereby I can't devote a whole month to do an entire comic, which seems to be what most publishers want. They don't seem to go in for short stories, which I prefer . six, eight, ten, twelve pages They want a complete package.

While Kathe Todd, editor of RIP OFF, was always very genial and helpful and considerate, I've had a few bad dealings with some of these publishers and heard a few stories, and I'm not sure I want to get involved. I once submitted a package of about thirty pages to Cat Yronwode, who wrote back, "When you can draw like Frazetta, we'll print it." Well, I don't want to draw like Frazetta!

Bill: It's a little surprising how much of your work, especially in recent years, has been cartoony or humorous in nature, not what you were known for. Yet it's great stuff!

Ronn: I credit Grass Green with much of my proclivity for humorous comics. I love his stuff as much as Kurtzman's and Jack Davis. As I've told him, I feel that gag art may be the best, since anything else, no matter how good, is a shadow of life ... while humor is what comic strips are about

Bill: You seem to especially enjoy caricaturing yourself.

Ronn: I don't mind making an ass of myself. We all are, on occasion!

Bill: Can you tell us a little about your kids?

Ronn: I could probably write a very, very lengthy letter, or even a book, talking about my kids. I m really nuts about them I have a beautiful 22-year old daughter Dawn My son Scott just turned 21. Both are students in Corvallis, Oregon We were best friends while they were growing

35MM CAMERA, 20 ROLLS OF FILM 24 8, VIDEO, EXTRA TAPES, TRIPOD, EXTRA BATTERIES, 8 COSTUMES, DOZENS OF NECKLACES, BRACELETS, EARRINGS, PEARLS, SHELLS... ASPIRIN, SUN-SCREEN DEFRESHMENTS — WHAT AM I FORGETTING?
© 1989 FOSS

MERMAID Videotaping & Photo Session

up, bosom buddies. I was like a child myself, being with them from ages five and six, when we moved here in 1975, through 1983 when they both began high school in Oregon. I was fortunate enough to be able to share in their wonder, discovery of everything from ants building their tunnels to all the profusion of wildlife we have in the Ozarks. We did absolutely everything together, from the mundane household chores to the creative things. We were enthralled with Halloween, all three of us. They are really into fantasy, movies, comic books, costumes. Both are quite adept with the pencil and ink. I can't say enough about them. I'm deeply satisfied with both of them. It was Dawn, my best friend in the world, who wrote a school report saying that creating comics is kind of like giving birth, which is maybe the closest thing we males can come to that process

Bill: Given your interest in film, it's not surprising that you got into video, but what are 'Mermaid' Videos?

Ronn: Because I've always loved film and shots lots of it, I wanted a video camera due to the added advantage of immediate replay, editing and re-shooting. When I began a series of watercolors called "Inner City," though I made black and white xeroxes, there was no availability of color copies, so I opted for videotape, which then could be offered for sale to interested parties. At the time, I was doing six mermaid drawings monthly, and the client offered me a generous trade of a videocamera instead of paying for all the mermaid drawings. Ergo, drawing of mermaids led to video of mermaids, which eventually led to two live action mermaid tapes ... also, two illustrated adult art tapes, as well as a compilation of other adult art from various commissioned assignments.

Bill: So in the final analysis, you have ended up making your living on your art talent, after all.

Ronn: While I've been able to make a very modest living illustrating, I don't have the discipline in me like Mike Vosburg to do mainstream comics day in and day out, nor even the determination of Grass Green, who somehow maintains a daily nine-to-five job at an art department, while also still doing lots of comicbooks through alternative publishers, as well. Perhaps I enjoy drawing too much to force it into prescribed molds, and not enough to really work at it for conventional acceptance on a broad scale. Though neither am I content to continually repeat myself, ever trying to do something at least a little different, if not a lot. My reach has frequently exceeded my grasp and hasn't always been appreciated, but I honestly do keep trying. I'll always draw, but that's not all I'm about. Life is too multi-faceted to apply all time and energies to a single focus.

Bill: Is there anything you'd like to say to wrap this up?

Ronn: As I age, I realize that the more I learn, the more there is to learn ... and lots I thought I knew isn't so One thing is, in the end, aside from the accumulated junk and the love of family and friends, all one really has is memories, which we make for ourselves every day. Thanks for the memories, comicdom!

The End

Editor's Note Since Ronn does not have a telephone, we collaborated to create this interview as a "simulated conversation." In fact, it was constructed primarily from letters Ronn wrote in October 1990, audio tapes from this same period, and from his autobiographical piece which saw print in CAPA-Beta #1 on a very limited basis. Also, material from various other fanzines was interpolated. We trust you forgive us the 'artistic license' we took.

Finally, we hasten to add that Ronn's words herein are, indeed, his own and have been reviewed by him prior to publication.

-- Bill Schelly, 11/19/91

FIRST & "BEST" BIRTHDAY CARD FOR RUSS COCHRAN

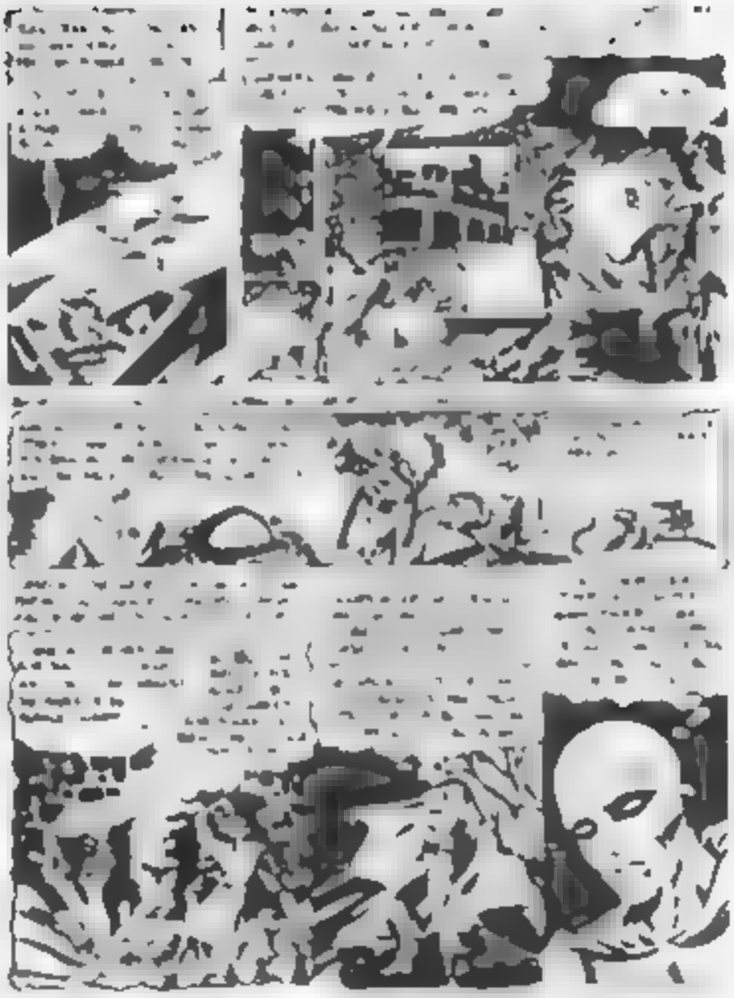
YRS TRULY

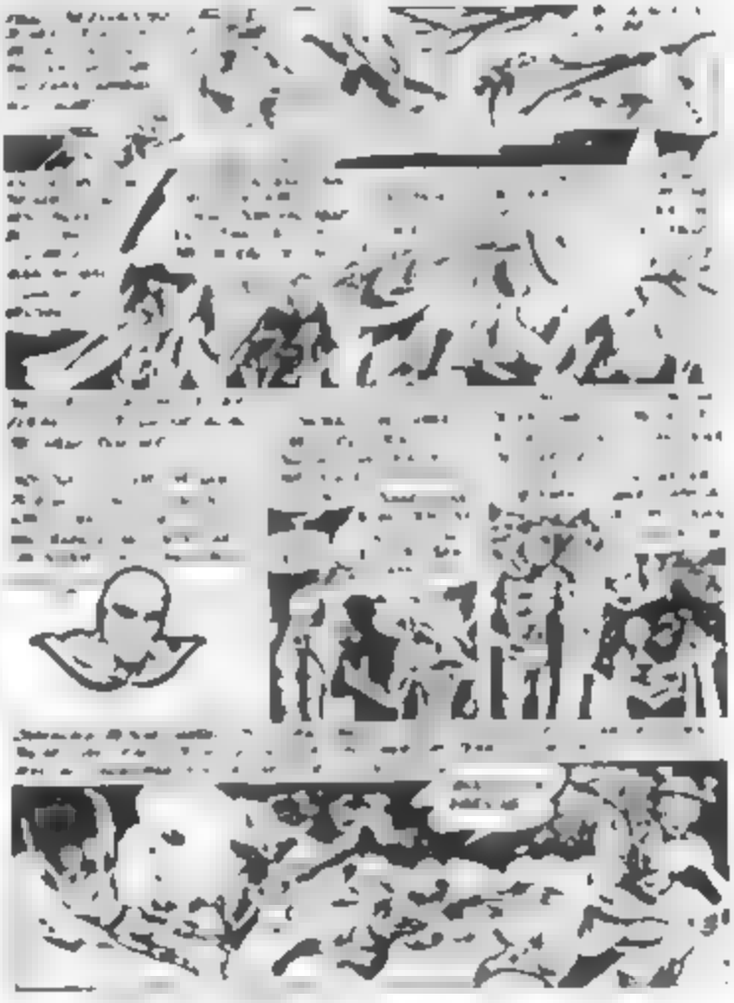
RUSS COCHRAN
BY ALEX RAYGUNNED
—AND THEN, IN 1953..
GOOD MORNING, RUSS COCHRAN PUBLISHING—
IS MY DADDY THERE?
CAN MR C. TELL ME THE VALUE OF A 1975 SUPERMAN COMIC BOOK MY SON HAS?
EC
NEXT WEEK
PANIC?

CHRIS ROCK

NOW THAT WINTER'S HERE, I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU—
...THE FUN OF HOME-MADE SKIS ON A HILL OF SNOW IN FEB.
A SAW THAT WON'T CUT CHAINS, BUT MAKES NICE TOOTHPICKS—
JOINT VENTURE
Comics Trip
#15
©'80
DANCES TO SPRING AND FALL.
TRIGGER HAPPY COWBOY HUNTERS WITH A 6-PAK AND A 12-GA.
AND FEELING LIKE AN Indian ABOUT TO
disappear
MOONDANCE

LIBERTY LEGION
CHAPTER I



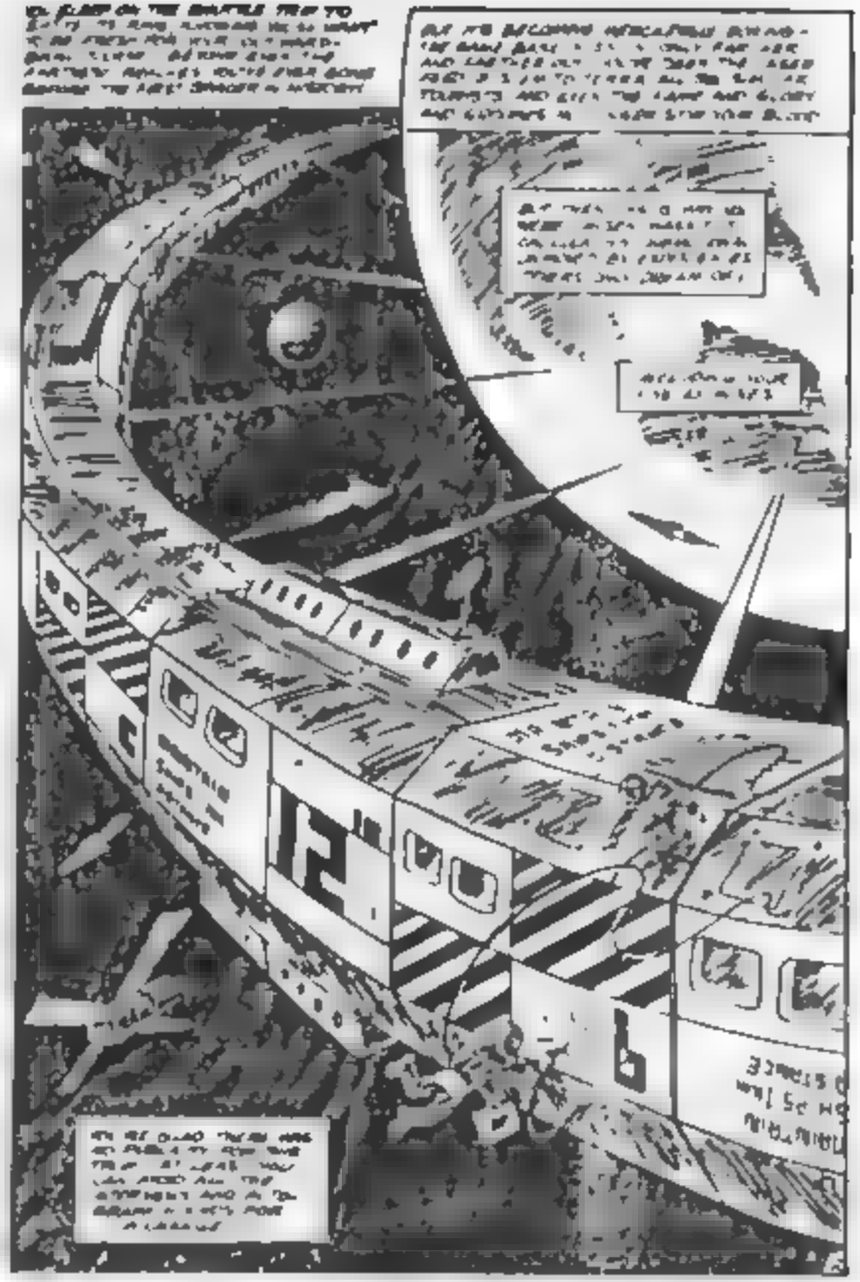


ONLY PAGES DONE, DX 15

ONE OF MY FAVE PAGES
ECLIPSE / WITCH HUNT

• '72 ROSS

SPACER-1
THEY'RE READY FOR YOU INSIDE NOW, COL BAKER.
THIS WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT PROJECT OF YOUR CAREER AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN ACCOMPLISH IT!
YOU'LL BE GOING FOR ONLY A FEW MINUTES BUT YOU'LL HAVE LOST SEVEN YEARS!
WELL AT LEAST I'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT TO MY 25TH ANNIVERSARY!
THE SAME OLD STORY, ISN'T IT. OVER AND OVER AGAIN, THE SAME ROUTINE YOU'VE HEARD AGAIN SO MANY TIMES BEFORE!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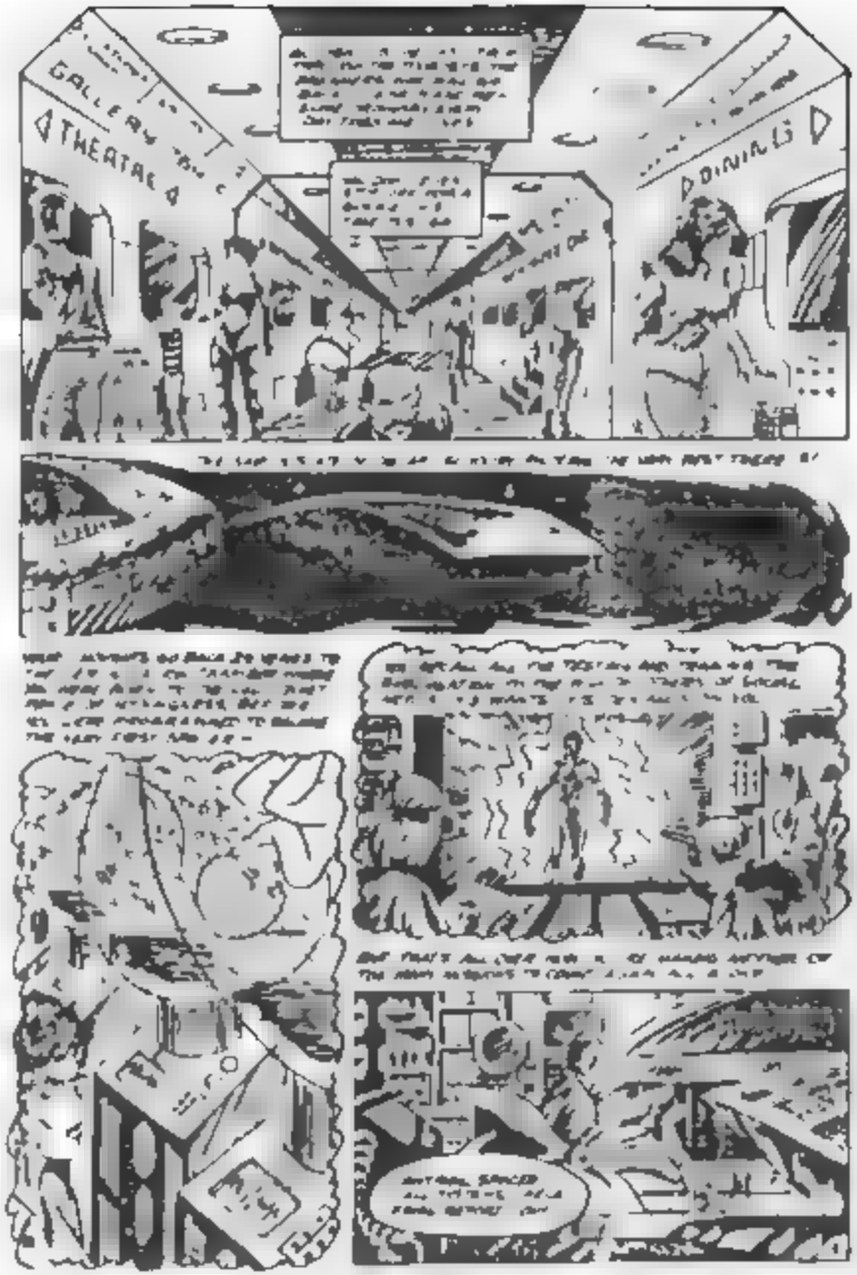
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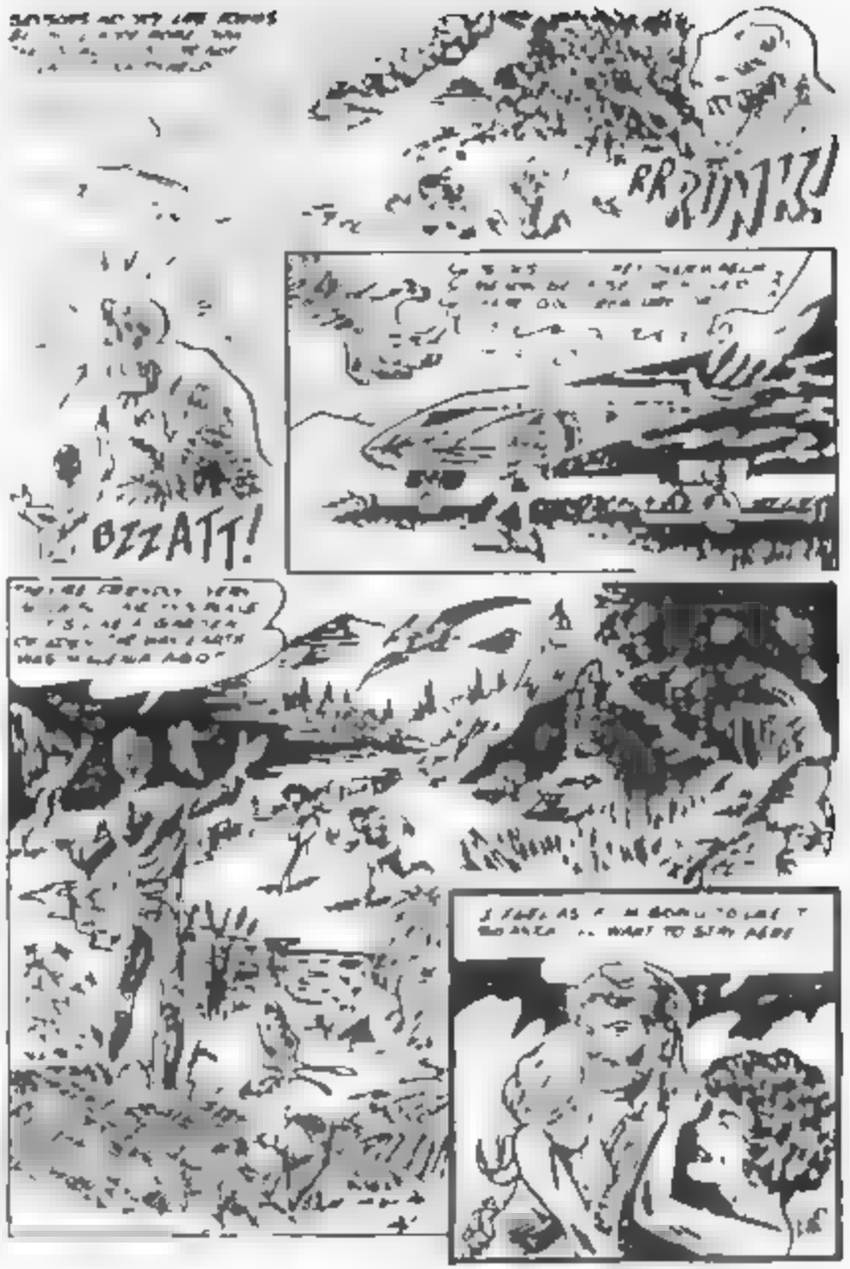
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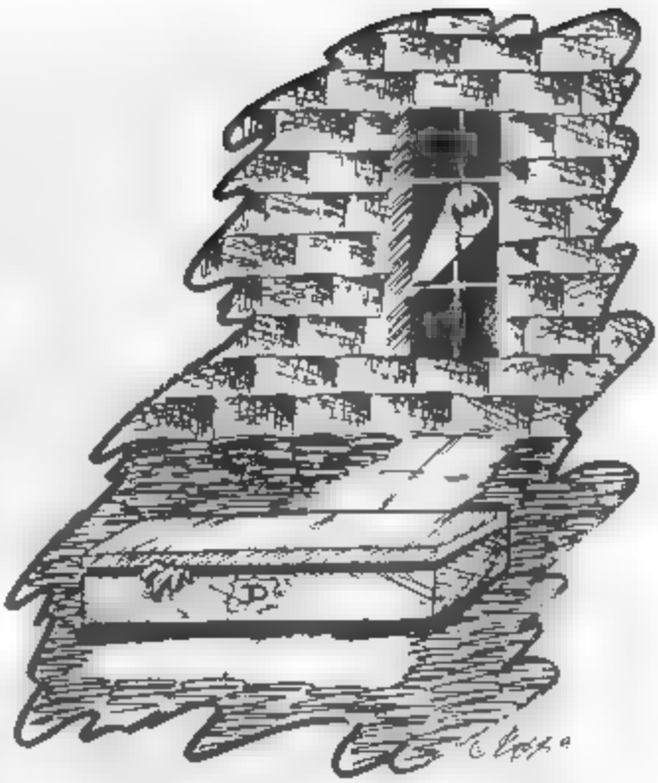
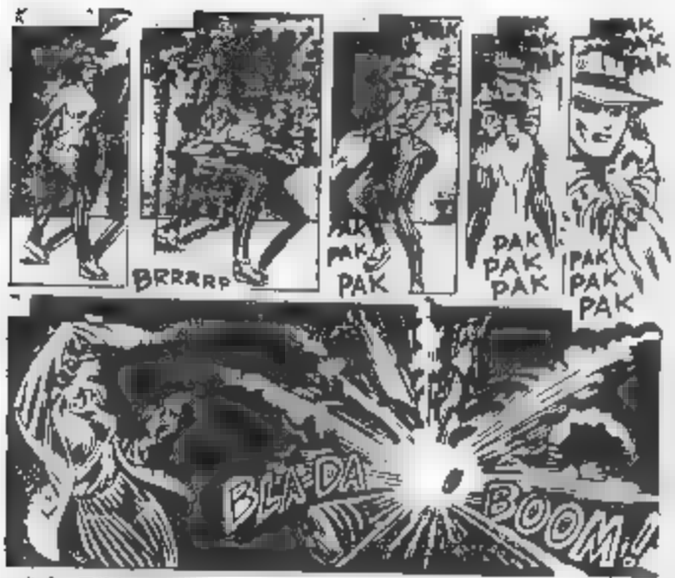
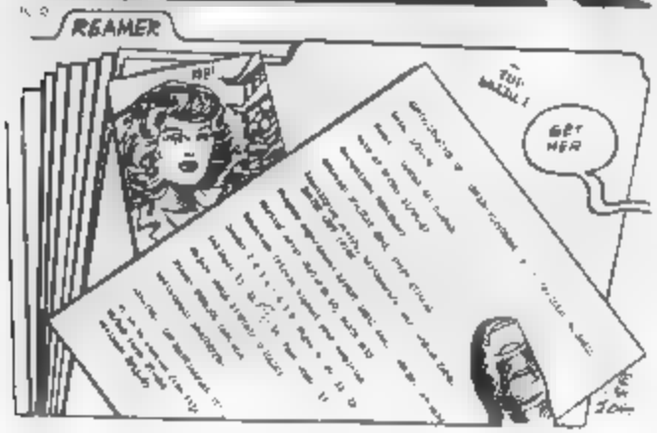






"SANDY REAMER"

Freddie's
BEST WESTERN
MOTEL
DANCING
TIL DAWN
©'88

50 FOSS 50

STRIPOGRAPHY - THE FOSS 'FIFTY'

This "stripography" does not purport to be a 100% complete listing of all sequential art done by Ronn Foss; however, it includes all of his best known strips (It does not include strips styled a la daily newspaper format or unfinished strips

Note. Written, Pencilled and Inked by Ronn Foss unless otherwise noted.

Ditto.

1 Title "Limbo"*
Starring Justice Society, others
Fanzine WILD #10 (1961)
Pages: 2

2 Title: "Dimension Man VS. Dr. Demon" - Part One (Origin)
Starring: Dimension Man
Created & Written by: Parley Holman
Fanzine. SPOTLITE #1 (1961)
Pages. 5

3) Title: "The Wheel That Menaced Washington"*
Starring: Little Giant
Created & Written by: Steve Gerber (using pseudonym S G. Ross,
Fanzine: HEADLINE #1 (1961)
Pages: 8

4 Title: "Dimension Man VS. Dr. Demon" - Part Two
Starring: Dimension Man (2
Written by: Parley Holman
Fanzine: SPOTLITE #2 (1962)
Pages: 7

5 Title. "Origin of the Cowl"
Starring. The Cowl
Created & Written by: Mike Vosburg
Fanzine: MASQUERADER #1 (1962)
Pages: 7

6 Title: "Terror in the Big Top"*
Starring The Viper (origin)
Fanzine. KOMIX ILLUSTRATED #5 (1962
Pages 10

7) Title. "Trapped in the 4th Dimension"
Starring: Dimension Man (3)
Written by: Steve Perrin
Fanzine: SPOTLITE #3 (1963,
Pages: 9

8) Title. "The Plan of Spy X"
Starring The Viper (2)
Written by Mickey Martin
Fanzine: KOMIX ILLUSTRATED #11 (1964)
Pages. 9

9) Title: "Velvet of Venus"*
Starring. Dimension Man (4)
Fanzine. FIGHTING HERO COMICS #12
Pages 8

10. Title: "Child of Clay"*
From Jimmy Rogers song
Fanzine: CAPA-ALPHA #43, reprinted in SENSE OF WONDER #7
Pages: 5

Offset (inked):

Note Pencils and inks by Ronn Foss unless otherwise noted.

11) Title "They're Here" UFO
Fanzine: unpublished 1959
Pages: 5

12) Starring. Tanaka the Outcast
Fanzine unpublished ,1961
Pages. 12

13, Starring: Silver Dallas
Fanzine unpublished (1961)
Pages: 8

14) Title. "The Eclipse" (origin)*
Starring The Eclipse
Created by: Drury Moroz & Ronn Foss
Written by: Drury Moroz
Fanzine: ALTER-EGO #5 (1963,
Pages. 10

15) Title: "A Gathering of Heroes!" - Chapter One*
Starring. The Liberty Legion
Written by. Larry Herndon & Buddy Saunders
(Other chapters drawn by Richard Grass Green, Billjo White, Buddy Saunders & Howard Keltner)
Fanzine. STAR-STUDDED COMICS #4 (1964
Pages: 4

16, Title. "Return of the Nebula!"*
Starring: The Cowl (2)
Written by. Mike Vosburg
Fanzine. MASQUERADER #6 (1964)
Pages: 6

17) Title & Starring: "Solano The Brave"*
Fanzine: VOICE OF COMICDOM (1965,
Pages: 5 (serialized)

18 Title "Undercover"*
Starring. Jim 'Laser' Beam
Fanzine. VOICE OF COMICDOM ,1965,
Pages 3 (serialized)

19) Title: "Belle Starr, First Woman in Space"*
Starring Belle Starr
Fanzine: ALL STARS #1 (1965)
Pages. 12

20) Title: "Introducing The Highwayman"*
Starring. The Highwayman
Fanzine: THE CARTOONIST #1 (1965,
Pages 7

21, Title: "The Mystery of Malimoor!"*
Starring: The Eclipse (2)
Written by: Drury Moroz
Fanzine ALTER-EGO #8 (1965)
Pages 9

22) Title: "The Origin of the Black Phantom"
Starring: Black Phantom & Wraith
Created & Written by: Steve Perrin
Lettered by: Bill Spicer
Fanzine. FANTASY ILLUSTRATED #6 (1966,
Pages: 13

23 Title "The Fox Returns"
Starring The Fox (Scott Storm
Fanzine: GOSH WOW #1
Pages: 16 (serialized)
(re done from DATELINE COMICDOM #5 - 12, 1963 - 1964)

24) Title: "Excel, Man of the Future"*
Starring Excel
Fanzine STAR-STUDDED COMICS #14 (1968)
Pages: 4

25, Title "Blade Becomes Cavalier"
Starring Blade/Cavalier
Fanzine: unpublished (1968)
Pages 8

26) Title: "A Tourney" (medieval)
Fanzine unpublished (1969
Pages: 4

27) Title: "Like It Is"
Fanzine: (unpublished (1969)
Pages 4

28) Title. "Excel VS. Siren"*
Starring Excel (2
Fanzine STAR-STUDDED COMICS #17 (1969)
Pages: 8

29) Title, "Virgin Sacrifice"
Fanzine unpublished (1970)
Pages 6

30, Title: "Which Witch"
Fanzine: unpublished (1970)
Pages. 6

31) Title: "What's It All About?"
Starring: Excel (3,
Fanzine: ELECTRIC STORIES #1 (1971)
Pages: 18

32) Title: "Witch Hunt"*
Starring: Eclipse (3)
Written by Coreen Casey
Fanzine: COMIC CRUSADER #12 (1971)
Pages: 18

33) Title: "New Guinea"
Fanzine: unpublished (1972)
Pages: 8

34) Title. "Your Brother's Keeper"
Fanzine unpublished (1972)
Pages: 12

35, Title. "Foxson"
Fanzine: unpublished (1972)
Pages: 8

36) Title: "Whatsoever Man Soweth"
Fanzine: MYTHOS (1972)
Pages: 5

37) Title: "Hell Is War"
Fanzine unpublished? (1972)
Pages: 5

38) Title: "Triangle"
Fanzine. unpublished (1972)
Written & Inked: Mike Vosburg
Pages: 2

39) Title: "In The Beginning"
Starring Devila, Devil's Daughter
Fanzine. unpublished (1973)
Pages: 6

40) Title: "Nature Girl"
Fanzine: ART 2/3 (1974
Pages. 6

41 Title "Target, My Son"
Starring. Shang-Chi
Fanzine: unpublished (1975)
Pages: 6

42, Title "Skyline Robbers"
Starring. Eclipse (4)
Written by: Martin L. Greim
Inks Gary Kato
Fanzine: COMIC CRUSADER STORYBOOK (1974,
Pages: 8

43) Title "Volsung Saga"
Adapted by Coreen Casey
Lettered by Cat Yronwode
Fanzine: FANTASY CROSSROADS (1975
Pages: 8

44) Title: "Dawn: 2828"
Fanzine. unpublished (1975)
Pages 5

45) Title "Eclipse Meets The Tigris"*
Starring: Eclipse (5)
Fanzine: unpublished (1976)
Pages: 8

46) Title: "Dawn"*
Starring Dawn
Fanzine: COMIC FANDOM ADVERTISER (1985
Pages: 13 (serialized,

47) Title: "Spacer-1"*
Fanzine: unpublished (1986)
Pages: 4

48) Title: "A Lad An' Genie"*
Fanzine. unpublished (1987)
Pages: 4

49) Title. "Swamp"*
Fanzine: (unpublished (1987)
Pages: 4

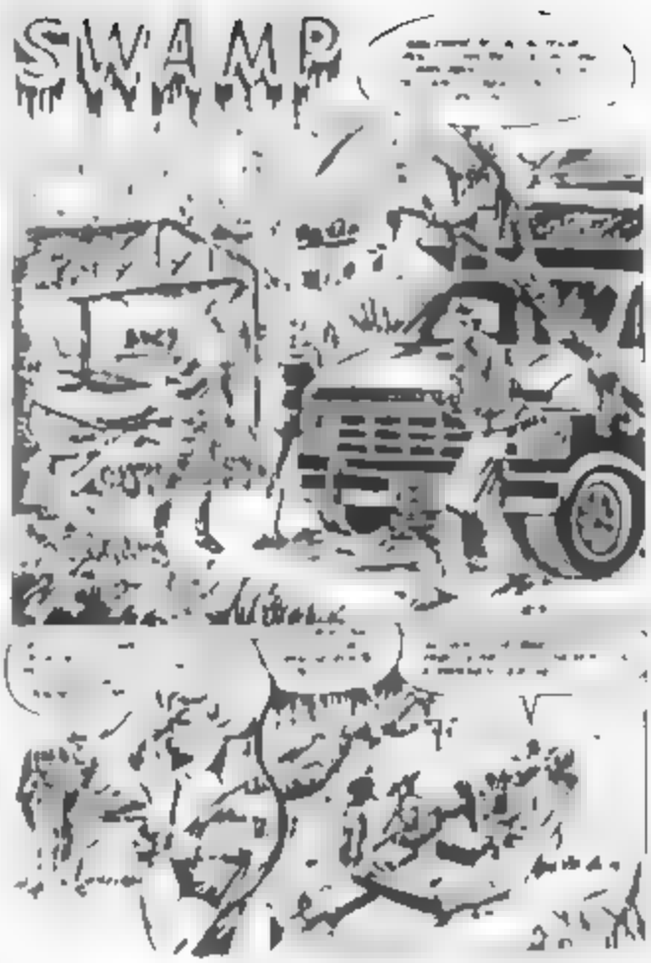
50) Title: "Hobo Hal Visits A Massage Parlor"
Starring: Hobo Hal
Created by Grass Green
Published: SINNIN'! #1
Pages: 9

* = Example shown in RONN FOSS RETROSPECTIVE #1

Ronn also did pencils for Grass Green's GOOD JIVE #1 (1972) and WILDMAN #1 (1987)

Additions and corrections are requested.

End



CARNEGIE HALL @ ORIGINAL 8X11— WASH

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Ronn Foss Retrospective #2

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Special LIMITED EDITION!!

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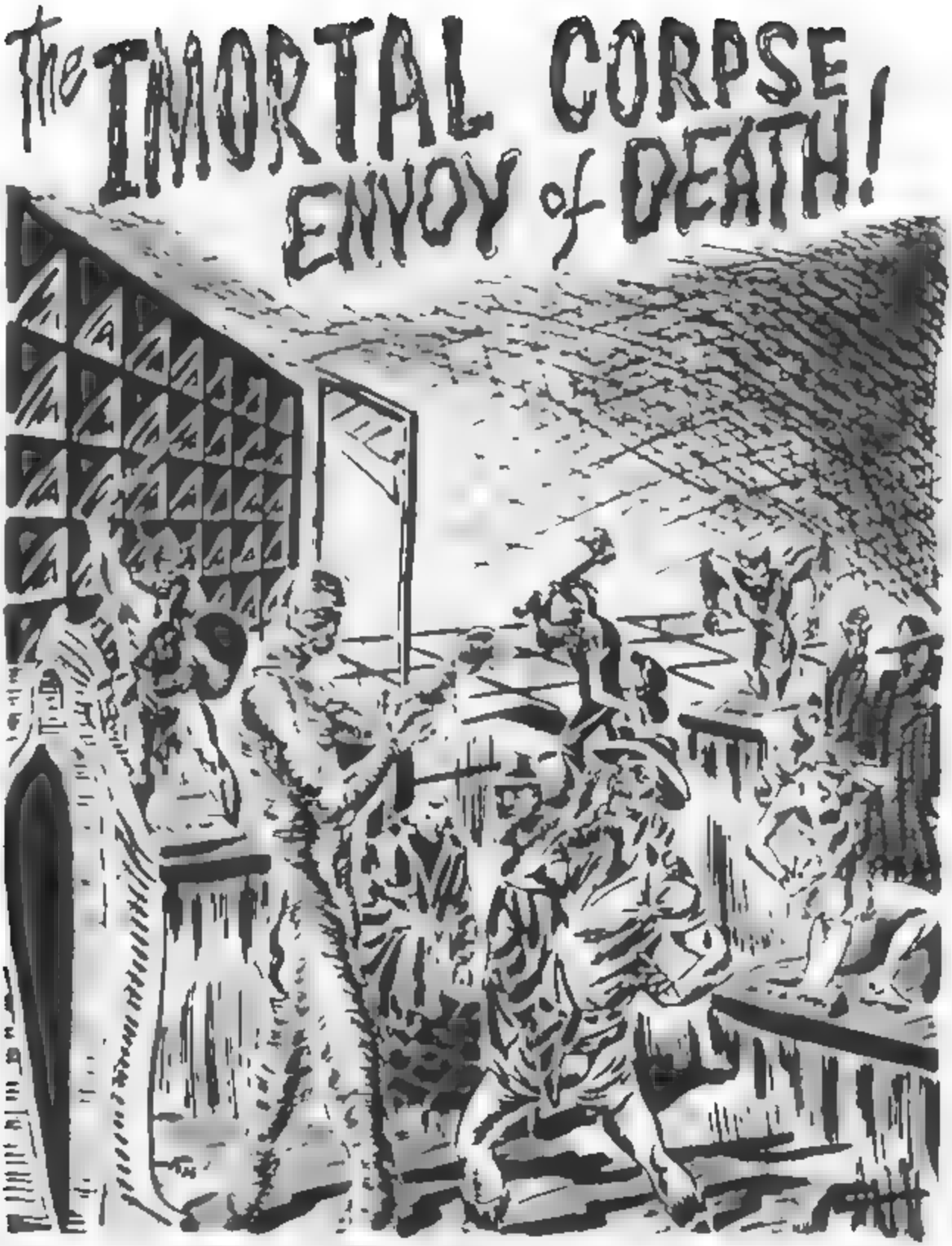
My Buddy Ronn

BY MIKE VOSBURG

RONN AND I F RST MET AT JERRY BA LS ALLEY TALLY IN '63 OUR COLLABORATIONS HAD MADE MY FANZ NE A HOT TEM
WE WERE BROTHERS OF THE BRUSH' OUR FEW ENCOUNTERS WERE ALWAYS SPENT D SCUSS NG THE AESTHET CS OF OUR CRAFT
NUDES
MOVED ON TO A H JOB WELDPAY NG CAREERAS A TOP-NOTCH ILLUSTRATOR CARTOONIST DRAWER
ROTINAL
MOP FLOOR
AL WAYS THE ACT v ST,RONN BOUGHT LAND IN M.SSOUR AND LIVED THE SPARTAN LIFE OF A HOMESTEADER
WH LE I NOW WORK IN A GLAMOROUS LA ST JD O
ORANGE
AND RONN STILL LIVES IN H S PR M T VE OZAR HOME
AFTER 30 YEARS WE RE STILL THE CLOSEST FRIENDS AND WHEN CAN GET TOGETHER OUR NTELLECTUAL D SCUSS ONS STILL GO ON
MORE NUDES



SENSE OF WONDER

NUMBER ONE

Bonn's cover to SENSE OF WONDER #1 illustrated a scene from Dick Tregaser's Immortal Corpse story, "Skimmer's At The Museum'" ('Immortal' is misspelled; didn't want to try to fix.)

From the desk of

Ronn Foss

Dear Bill, 11/21/91

I really think you've done a marvelous job on the Interview, owever... glaringly missing is **your** by-line on this MON-OU-MENT-ALL project! I hope you'll rectify this in final opies? (You **must** be credited, Bill.)

A couple of other additions to the Interview, if there's time: 1) I'd like to give more than a passing mention to Chris Rock, who deserves more acknowledgement than just "we were close friends." He's been "there" for me through some hard times. For example, in 1979 he let me stay in his apartment in West Plains for a period of time, even after the landlord told him he wasn't paying for 2 people and I feared Chris might be thrown out. Chris told me, "I don't care. I'll find another place." **Now, that's friendship!** He's been a **great** friend, and I just feel I owe him more than a passing mention. 2) At the end, I'd like to express gratitude to **you** for all your interest and labor of love!

I'm glad the Retrospect will be part of CAPA-alpha -- **The Last Survivor of the Golden Age of Comicdom!**

SHAZAM!

Ronn

EDITOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank **Tom** (House of Info) **McGeehan**, who came to my rescue twice with vital information (of course;; **Jeff Gelb**, for trusting me with his copy of FANDOM PRESENTS #1; **Mike Vosburg**, for his page (and some good ideas for RFR #2); and, again, **Richard Pryor**, who not only "got the ball rolling" but underwrote **half** the printing costs. Heroes all!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT COMMISSIONING **CUSTOM ART** BY RONN FOSS, WRITE TO HIM AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS (INCLUDE SASE AND $1.00 FOR SAMPLES):

Ronn Foss
Artist 'X'-Press
Route #3 Box 40
Birch Tree, MO 65438

My art is my mistress, my partner, my mate.
She's my pleasure, and sometimes my pain
When I know she can be better but isn't,
Even after all I try to help her.

She's my consolation in times of gloom,
And my glory when we're both at our best.
She lets me down only when I let her down,
And picks me up when I feel I can't go on any longer.

She's my baby, birthed in ages past
Of trial and error and retrial and success,
The sweat of my brow, conceived in my depths.

She's as fluid as my own fantasies,
At times a queen, and other times a harlot,
My joy and my sorrow, my delight and despair.

She comes to me in the quiet night
And stirs my soul to activity,
Taunting me with her beauty and haunting allure.

She's my life and she knows it!
Long after I'm gone my love will still be
Seducing others.

-91 ©

DAKTN 9 SEA-GOD!
YOU INVADED OUR
BE SERVED TO OUR
SEA GOD"
NEXT: SLAVES!

29 Years Ago.
Two of Fandom's Favorite Artists got together at the White House of Comics in Columbia Missouri Biljo White l and Ronn Foss r examine a rare copy of BATMAN #1, which was worth up to $100 00 in 1963

Welcome!

This fanzine was originally conceived as a small supplement to the first RONN FOSS RETROSPECTIVE, for those who expressed a strong desire to own a collection of Ronn s best comic strips from the Golden Age of Comic Fandom (1961 - 1971). With the encouragement and assistance from Jeff Gelb, Richard Pryor, Mike Vosburg, Grass Green and Joe Kubert, it became a bit more ambitious along the way.

The special cover was prompted and partly paid for by my brother, Dave Schelly ... a confirmed "Foss Fan." It was prepared in collaboration between Ronn and myself, though the color scheme was his design. This recreation of a scene from "The Mystery of Malimoor!" is published here for the first time.

Before I comment briefly on the contents, I would be remiss if I didn t point out the tremendous work of the writers represented herein. Sincere thanks to Drury Moroz, Mike Vosburg and Steve Perrin, and also Coreen Casey who assisted on both "The Fox Returns!" and "Witch Hunt."

RONN FOSS

In This Issue...

THE COWL: Return of the Nebula!

The Cowl first appeared in a ditto'd origin strip in Mike Vosburg's MASQUERADER #1 (September 1962). This follow up from MASQ #6 (June 1964, was only Ronn's second inked strip for Comicdom

THE ECLIPSE: The Mystery of Malimoor!

The second appearance of the Eclipse shows Foss in top form a near perfect balance of boldness and restraint, mixing diverse drawing techniques with astonishing virtuosity. Page 6 is my favorite, though Ronn commented later: "I always wondered why Dru had the Eclipse refer to Teresa Aster as an 'empty-headed blonde' when in fact she seems quite the opposite!"

RONN FOSS RETROSPECTIVE #2 (April 1992) is edited and published by William C. Schelly, 3032 N.E. 130th St., Seattle, Wa. 98125. All artworks herein, unless otherwise noted, are © copyright 1992 by Ronn Foss. Text material © copyright 1992 by William Schelly. **Further information about commissioning Custom Art by Ronn Foss can be obtained by sending $1.00 to him at: Route #3, Box 40, Birch Tree, Missouri, 65438.**

Hamster Press No. 50

"The Liberty Legion" from STAR-STUDDED COMICS #4 (1964) was Fandom's Justice Society. The Texas Trio solicited Foss to illustrate Chapter One of the 5 part saga.

FOR THE FIRST TIME THE WORLD'S SIX MOST POWERFUL BEINGS MEET ATOP A NAMELESS MOUNTAIN NEAR A SMALL MID-WESTERN CITY—
AS ASTRAL MAN GAVE ME A RIDE HERE WE LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT EACH OTHER .. BUT WHO ARE THE REST OF YOU?
WHAT STRANGELY GARBED MORTALS!
SAY YOU'RE DR. WEIRD, AREN'T YOU?
THAT'S RIGHT— AND YOU'RE THE DEFENDER WE READ ALL ABOUT!

THE FOX:
The Fox Returns!

This excerpt (5 pages of 16) should give the reader a good idea of Foss at his most free-wheeling and playful. Ronn was a big fan of James Bond, and the Fox is one of two strips (the other is Jim 'Laser' Beam, where he tried his hand at a dashing plain-clothes hero. He told me that Lloyd Bridges was his model for The Fox.

THE BLACK PHANTOM

FANTASY ILLUSTRATED editor Bill Spicer first approached black comic artist Richard "Grass" Green to illustrate Steve Perrin's origin of the first black amateur costumed hero. Though Grass turned him down, it is somehow fitting that his lifelong friend took up the assignment in his stead. The "cross-burning" on page 7 is a knock out!

ANGELIQUE

All four pages appeared in RIP OFF COMIX #28, edited by Kathe Todd. They allow the writer/artist a canvas to comment on religion, politics and, of course, sex. Angelique is one of Ronn's personal favorite projects.

THE ECLIPSE:
Witch Hunt!

Six years elapsed between the second and third adventures of the "Master of the Midnight Hours," this time a tale both written and drawn by R.E.F. "Witch Hunt" reflects his interest in the subject of witchcraft, and finds a clever way to place the mutual attraction of Craig Pierce and Tess Aster in the center of the plot.

EXCEL:
Excel VS. Siren!

With GREEN LANTERN #76 (1970), relevancy came to comics . . pro comics, that is. Ronn had completed this incendiary installment of his Excel trilogy the year before. Ronn and Coreen were living in San Francisco at the time, and involved with the Society for Creative Anachronism The final panel is undeniably powerful. STAR STUDDED COMICS inexplicably relegated "Siren Defeats Excel!" to 1/2-size printing; I'm pleased to be able to present it here, for the first time, in its intended format.

Now that the second RETROSPECTIVE has been completed, my only regret is that it has been impossible to truly showcase the breadth of the man's talent and accomplishments. Although he moved away from the super hero genre in the early 1970's, Ronn remained prolific and has tried his hand at virtually every variation of sequential art, from a daily-style 3-panel humor strip called "O'Zarx Himself," to underground comix-type material, as well as stories dealing with environmental concerns and other societal problems. In addition, he has done hundreds of drawings of mermaids, which could easily make up a charming volume in and of themselves. Perhaps some time in the future these fascinating and often provocative works can be gathered together for publication.

Fannishly,

Bill Schelly

Bill Schelly

Hi! This is Ronn Foss...
YOU KNOW, AFTER AWHILE, ILLUSTRATING COSTUMED HEROES—(and heroines, excuse me, Viper!) BEGINS TO 'TAKE A GUY OVER', AS YOU SEE!!
A FEW BRICK-LADEN BOUQUETS FROM:
STAN LEE
EDITOR
ROY THOMAS
WRITER
RONN FOSS
ARTIST
JOHN VERPOORTEN
INKER
HERB COOPER
LETTERER
FANG
Silver DALLAS
1880. THE WEST IS BECOMING SETTLED AND THE NOBLE RED MAN SLOWLY VANISHING IN A BACK ROOM OF THE LONGHORN BAR IN TOMBSTONE AR ZONA A POKER GAME 'OUT LIES
ONE ARD DEALER
DIVA LEE LUCK DALLAS I'M RAISIN YOU FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS
YEP - I FIGURE ON TAKIN' THAT POT AGA IN
AS A MATTER OF FACT SOONS YOU GIVE ME A CARD, I'LL CALL AND RAISE ANOTHER FIVE HUNDRED
I FOLD.
ME TOO!!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE I DON'T TAKE CARDS FROM THE BOTTOM
BOOM BOOM
YORE ASKIN FER IT DALLAS
DON'T MAKE ME KILL YOU DEALER
BUT BEFORE SILVER CAN CLEAR HIS HOLSTER—
GET RID O HIM
NEXT WEEK ON CO

(Clockwise from upper left) Ronn a la The Viper (KOMIX ILLUSTRATED #5), credit box from Valentines in NOT BRAND ECCH! #13, FANG logo (Foss-and-Green), Silver Dallas sample (ca. 1960), Solano The Brave from VOICE OF COMICDOM, O'Zarx Himself sample, and Foss working on the origin of The Eclipse in California (1962).

BEGOBS AH LADDY— I DINNA THINK I DUNNO THAT EVEN NOO-KLE-YER CANNA WIPE OUT EVERYTHING!
EVEN IF IT DON'T HIT MY GROUND ZERO, IT'S JUSTA MATTER OF TIME..
-AFORE THE RADIATION POISONS ALL 'ROUND THE WORLD
THE WHOLE GLOBE WORLD AS IN ENTIRE MAP OF?
EVER WI' TINY BIT THERE OF
CAN YA LEND ME A SHOVEL LADDY— I'M GONE DIG A DEEP HOLE
QUICK

FOGG

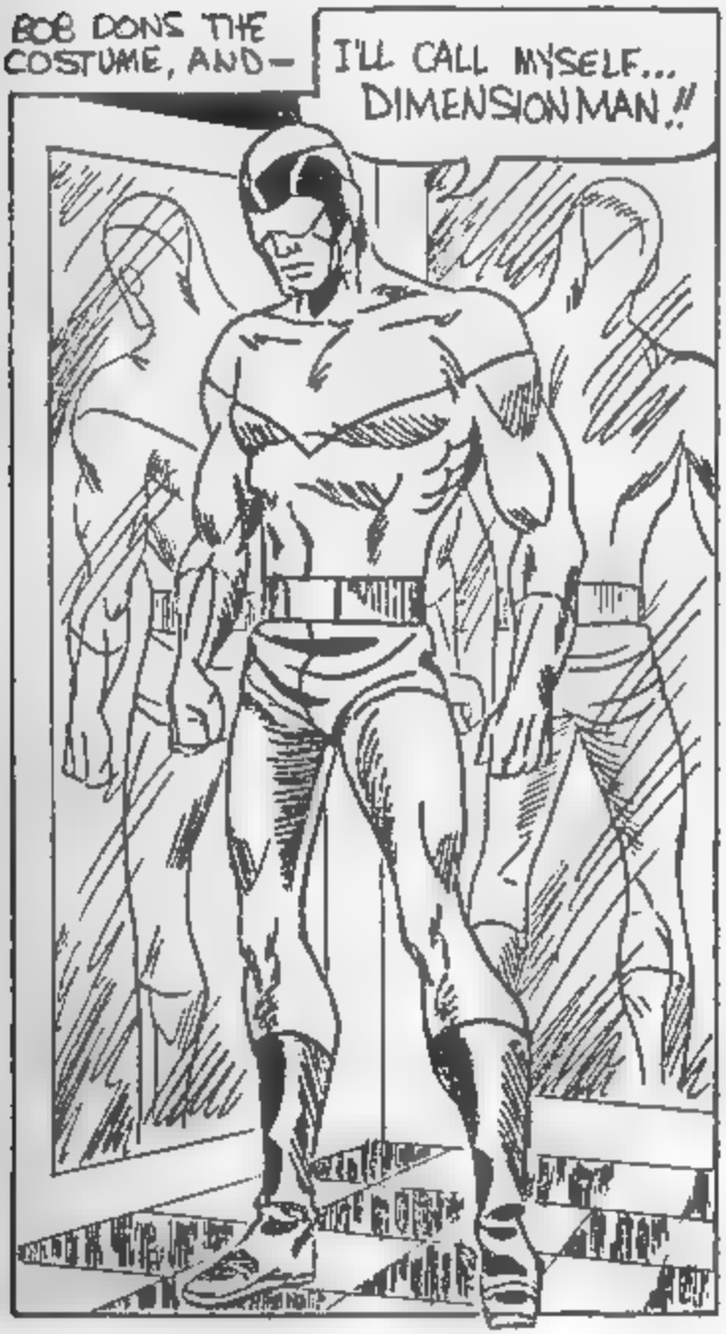
MASTER OF THE MIDNIGHT HOURS... SWIFT, SILENT-AS-A-SHADOW SENTINEL... CAT-LIKE NEMESIS OF INJUSTICE —

WE'VE FINALLY WON!
1944/1964
18
FOSS

SPOTLITE on DIMENSION MAN

Created by PARLEY HOLMAN 1961

Illustrated by RONN FOSS



by Bill Schelly

On March 18, 1992 I talked with Parley Holman on the telephone about his early association with Ronn Foss. This brief article on Dimension Man, the character they co-created, is partly derived from my notes of that conversation.

* * * *

Parley Holman saw his first fanzines when he was about twelve years old. "There were E.C. fanzines that I had discovered through the ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN letter column around 1959," he said "Sometime in the spring of 1961 I got a truncated version of ALTER-EGO #1. Jerry Bails was sending it out to people who had letters published in comics. I thought, gosh, I can do something just as good as this!" Par began writing people like Roy Thomas for contributions to his proposed fanzine, to be called SPOTLITE

"I think Roy sent Ronn a copy of my letter," Par recalled. Ronn wrote Holman asking what was needed, stating that he was an artist. Ronn had recently been discharged from the Air Force in Fairfield, California and was plunging back into the field of comic strips with an eye toward turning pro. He was 21 and living with his wife Myra. Foss was a godsend to the young Salt Lake City fan, and Par began discussing a possible comic strip with him.

"I had this idea for a character called Dimension Man. And then Ronn came along I told him about my idea for the character, and on his own he drew a little illustration at the bottom of one of his letters. The character's visualization more or less came from that drawing of Ronn's." They agreed to collaborate, and soon Foss was taking pencil to his first spirit duplicator masters. Like Roy Thomas with the "Bestest League of America" parody in ALTER EGO, Ronn chose to use black dittos (rather than the usual purple); coupled with Par's inexperience

DIMENSION MAN

with operating a spirit duplicator, the first chapter printed poorly, and there were less than 100 copies made of SPOTLITE #1. It was mailed about November 25th, 1961. (This was pinpointed because Ronn had an auction ad inside with a November 30th deadline. Though the issue was mailed prior to the deadline, slow 3rd class mail delivery caused most copies to be received in the first week of December, too late to respond to the ad.)

Dimension Man was created very much in the mold of the Schwartz-edited super heroes of DC, whose powers could be explained scientifically. Like Barry Allen, Bob Black was a policeman, in this case an undercover detective. His powers were induced by accidental exposure to a "strange yellow ray" invented by a renegade scientist known as Dr. Demon. He gained the power to "warp dimensions to any given destination by sheer will power," teleporting himself instantly anywhere.

Dimension Man's battle against Dr. Damon appeared in installments over the first three issues of SPOTLITE, for a total of 21 pages, each chapter written by a different writer. Part I was penned by Holman, Part II by Dean Newman, and Part III ("Trapped in the 4th Dimension!") by Steve Perrin. Perrin, who later collaborated with Foss on Black Phantom in FANTASY ILLUSTRATED #6, did a tremendous job on the conclusion, by far the strongest chapter.

The art, which showed Foss' admiration for Simon and Kirby, was rather awkward at first. Holman remembers, "Ronn was as good as anybody who was being published in the comics at the time." Well, not quite. He wouldn't hit his early "peak" until late 1962 with The Eclipse. Still, even at the start he was head and shoulders above most amateur artists. After all, he'd been working at it for over five years before he became involved in Fandom.

Later, in 1964, Ronn wrote and illustrated the last Dimension Man adventure entitled "Velvet of Venus!" for G. B. Love's FIGHTING HERO COMICS #12. Unfortunately, there were no further stories of this unique character, whose potential was never really explored. (Such was often the fate of amateur characters, who appeared with great fanfare -- then vanished.)

In preparing the RONN FOSS RETROSPECTIVE #1, I discovered that Part I of Dimension Man was Ronn's first original super hero strip published. Upon conducting further research, I began to suspect what I now believe. Dimension Man was the first amateur super hero strip created for and published in Comicdom, period! Thus, Dimension Man has a special place in the history of Comic Fandom.

True, I have only seen a few fanzines from 1961. It is doubtful that the SF fanzines that ran comic articles at the time (XERO, SKYBIRD, SO WHAT featured original heroes for Fandom, nor did ALTER EGO until later) or COMIC ART. THE COMICOLLECTOR (Sept. 1961) and ROCKET'S BLAST (Dec. 1961) were mainly adzines.

Certainly, many were in the planning stages or simply unpublished. Soon Bill Jo White would make the scene with KOMIX ILLUSTRATED, which launched many characters, but this was not until July of the following year.

SPOTLITE lasted a total of 4 issues. "I believe 1964 was about when I bailed out. I frankly discovered sex," Par commented, laughing. "I got a girlfriend and that was what I became interested in. I've been peripherally active in one kind of Fandom or another for the past 38 years."

The COWL

Originally appeared in MASQUERADER #6 (1964) © Foss

FIVE AFTER FOUR, AND NO JIM SPADE YET!
AT A PARKSIDE CAFE A LOVELY GIRL WAITS IMPATIENTLY
Chateau
HE ALWAYS MANAGES TO PICK SUCH OUT OF THE WAY SPOTS ... HE'S ALMOST STRANGE SOMETIMES!
JIM! JIM!
OH - I BEG YOUR PARDON! I THOUGHT YOU WERE JIM SPADE, A FRIEND OF MINE... 'M SORRY!!
SO AM I SORRY!
A MISTAKE... ANYONE COULD'VE MADE: FORGET IT!!
HA-HAH! NO WONDER SHE MISTOOK ME FOR SPADE ... IRONICALLY, EVEN THOUGH I'M HIS ARCH-ENEMY WE'RE ALMOST TWINS!!
NO DOUBT HE THINKS ME DEAD... BUT IF HE EVER CAREFULLY READS THE NEWSPAPERS HE'LL FIND I SOMEHOW ESCAPED THE AUTO CRASH!!
HE MIGHT EVEN REALIZE HOW EASY IT AS TO CHECK POLICE RECORDS AND FIGURE OUT BY SIMPLE DEDUCTION THAT HE'S THE COWL!!

AND NOW, AFTER CAREFUL STUDY, I'VE FINALLY PLANNED MY REVENGE!
EIGHT O'CLOCK, AND A DEJECTED SANDRA SAUNDERS RETURNS TO HER APARTMENT—
JIM HAD CERTAINLY BETTER HAVE A GOOD EXCUSE FOR STANDING ME UP!
AS SANDY UN-LOCKS HER DOOR—
MMPHH!
CHLOROFORM DID THE TRICK! WHEN SPADE SHOWS UP HERE TONIGHT THAT NOTE WILL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING!
NINE O'CLOCK, AND A SHEEPISH JIM SPADE ARRIVES, ONLY TO FIND NO ANSWER TO HIS REPEATED KNOCKS...
SANDY, I'M SORRY I'M SO LATE — PLEASE LET ME IN! GIVE ME A CHANCE TO TRY TO EXPLAIN!
TRYING THE DOOR, JIM FINDS IT UNLOCKED —
SANDY, I'M VERY SORRY I... SANDY? HMMM — SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE HERE! WHAT'S THIS... A NOTE —
SOMEHOW HE'S DISCOVERED MY SECRET! I THINK I'D BETTER SHOW UP AS THE COWL!!
SHORTLY, AT AN OLD MANSION IN THE SUBURBS —
HE HAS SANDY, AND SHE APPEARS TO BE DRUGGED!
3

WITHOUT BREAKING HIS PACE OR A MOMENTS HESITATION —
EVEN BEFORE THE LAST TINKLE OF GLASS DIES AWAY, COWL IS AT H.S FIANCE'S SIDE...
SANDY—SANDY, WAKE UP! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? SANDY, SPEAK TO ME —
Uhhh—JIM. IS IT REALLY YOU? WHAT HAPPENED??
IT'S REALLY H.M. MISS SAUNDERS' OR SHOULD I SAY, WAS HIM!!
NEBULA! WELL HAVE THIS OUT HERE AND NOW.
BEFORE NEBULA CAN AIM CAREFULLY, THE COWL LEAPS ACROSS THE ROOM—
BLAM!
REGAINING HIS FEET, NEBULA RETALIATES—
ONLY TO BE COUNTERED AGAIN—
UNLESS YOU HAVE SOME OBJECTION, I'D LIKE TO TRY TO GET THIS OVER WITH!
AS HE FALLS, A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING DROPS FROM NEBULA'S POCKET—

CATCHING HIS ATTENTION, THE YELLOWED SCRAP IS PICKED UP BY COWL—

WHAT'S THIS? AN OLD NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ABOUT ME..

AS COWL READS THE PAPER, A GREAT LOAD IS TAKEN OFF HIS MIND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THREE YEARS, SINCE —

"I WAS DETECTIVE J.T., AND MY FRIEND KEN DAVIS HAD JUST BEEN APPOINTED TO THE POLICE FORCE

P.D.

"—KEN WAS BRAGGING ABOUT HOW GOOD A COP HE'D MAKE. AND I COULDN'T HELP BUT BOAST THAT I WAS A BETTER DETECTIVE... HE LAUGHED, THEN GOT MAD!"

"IN ANGER, I STRUCK BACK! NEITHER OF US KNEW THERE WAS AN UPRIGHT BROKEN BOTTLE IN HIS PATH — UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE!! I PANICED AND RAN, KNOWING I'D BE BLAMED —"

"I STILL WANTED TO FIGHT CRIME, SO I STAYED IN HIDING DURING THE DAY, THEN DONNED AN OPERA CAPE AND MASK AT NIGHT!"

CHRONICLE
MYSTERIOUS HERO STOPS ROBBERY LEAVES SCENE

ESCAPED CONVICT CAPTURED BY MYSTERY MAN

"WHEN I FIRST ENCOUNTERED THE NEBULA, OUR BATTLE ENDED WITH HIS AUTO CRASH — I ESCAPED, BUT DIDN'T THINK HE POSSIBLY COULD!"

AND THIS CLIPPING TELLS ME THAT KEN DAVIS LIVED AND EXPLAINED ALL! I'M A FREE MAN!!
NOW THAT WE'VE ESTABLISHED THAT, HOW ABOUT FREEING ME, JIM??
RELEASING SANDY, COWL BINDS NEBULA FOR HIS DELIVERY TO JAIL—
I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR DISGUISE, BUT WHY THE ASTRONOMICAL INFLUENCE IN HIM?
I GATHER HE'S A WOULD-BE ASTROLOGER— HENCE THE NAME NEBULA!
IRONIC THAT AN ENEMY WOULD DO ME SO MUCH GOOD - THIS WILL PROBABLY BE MY LAST WORK AS THE COWL!
DETECTIVE JIM SPADE SUITS ME JUST FINE!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING MYSELF BUT I'VE PLENTY OF TIME NOW TO EXPLAIN WHAT I CAN!
AS THE COWL RECALLS HIS STRANGE PAST AND EVEN STRANGER THIRST OF FORTUNE, ANOTHER LAWBREAKER TWINGES WITH ANTICIPATION OF HIS FUTURE. SO ENDS THE STORY OF A COSTUMED-HERO!!
Finis

The Eclipse
MASTER OF THE MID-NIGHT HOURS. SILENT SWIFT AS A SHADOW
the MYSTERY of MALIMOOR!
KNEW FULL WELL THE LEGEND SURROUNDING ITS
THE WONDERFUL NONSENSE OF THEIR "HAUNTED
HOUSEWARMING" WOULD BE INTERRUPTED BY STARK
TERROR-OWN THE ECLIPSE DARED BRAVE THE
SUPERNATURAL TO FIND THE SOLUTION TO...
LARGER-WEAKENING ME!!
CAN IT BE THAT MALIMOOR
THIS IS THE MELANCHOLY STORY
ALONE AND UNLOVED AND ITS

Originally appeared in ALTER EGO #8 (1965)

"THEN CAME THAT FATEFUL YEAR OF THE GREAT FAMINE — WHEN CROPS FAILED. MAN COULD NOT LIVE..."
"THE WEALTHIEST MAN IN THE VILLAGE OF CRESCENT WAS KEMMET MALIMOOR, WHO MADE A FORTUNE
OUT WITH YOU— ALL OF YOU! I WON'T LEND A CENT!!
"TIS SAID THAT PLAGUE AND PESTILENCE WERE RAMPANT IN THE
HALF ITS POPULATION WERE TAKEN — AND ONE OF THE SICKENED, AN ANOINED WITCH, PRONOUNCED A CURSE..."
YOUR SOUL HAS CONDEMNED YOU AND SHALL BE YOUR REWARD, AND THE DEVIL HIMSELF YOUR EXECUTIONER!
AIEEE!!
"AND KEMMET MALIMOOR DID OR DID HE? NO ONE EVER REALLY KNEW! 'TIS SAID AT MIDNIGHT, ON A MOONLESS, DARK NIGHT, A GHOSTLY FIREBALL CAN BE SEEN FLOATING ABOUT MALIMOOR!!"
AMONG THE GUESTS ARE DR. CRAIG (THE ECLIPSE) PIERCE AND HIS PERSONAL NURSE, TERESA AS
BUT THAT JUST TERRIFYING DR PIERCE? TO THINK THE GHOST MAN STILL EXIST!

IT MIGHT AT THAT, MISS ASTER - AND I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF IT VISITED US TONIGHT!

I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET YOU COME HERE .. YOU'RE STILL N DELICATE HEALTH AFTER THAT AWFUL LAB EXPLOSION*!

*SEE ALTER EGO-5 ORIGIN

I DON'T KNOW WHO SHE'S TRYING TO CONVINCE - HERSELF OR ME BUT IT'S MY OWN FAULT I SUPPOSE... WHEN I THOUGHT - D BE BLIND FOR LIFE, THE HOSPITAL SENT ME A WELFARE WORKER - MISS ASTER

D DISCHARGE HER IN A MOMENT IF I WOULDN'T CREATE SUSPICION OF MISS ASTER END OF THE ECLIPSE BESIDES I'VE GROWN A BIT FOND OF THIS ENDEARING LITTLE SCATTER-BRAIN.

HERE COME OUR HOSTS THE PHELPSES..

SO THERE YOU ARE DR PIERCE - AND THIS MUST BE YOUR RECEPTIONIST MISS TERESA ASTER?!

ENJOYING THE PARTY, DR PIERCE?

THE NIGHT IS YOUNG - JUST REMEMBER WE AREN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR GUESTS' SAFETY THOSE WHO CAME DID SO AT THEIR OWN RISK!!

LATER AS CRAIG SURVEYS THE GATHERING -

THERE'S ENOS CRAMER THE BANKER - MR PHELPS IS HIS CHIEF ACCOUNTANT YET HE SEEMS TO BE AVOIDING THE PHELPSES HMMM -

AS THE BUTLER AND MAID ENTER -

THAT'S ODD.. SAM BORDEN AND LUCY KNOWLIN! THEY WERE DOING TIME FOR A GOLD SWINDLE THE LAST I HEARD OF THEM - WONDER IF OUR HOST KNOWS

SUDDENLY, THE LIGHTS DIM -

MUST BE GETTING CLOSE TO MIDNIGHT - TIME FOR THE GHOST OF MALMOOR MANOR

AND OUT OF THE DARKNESS -

YIIEEE!

FLAP FLAP CLAP FLAP

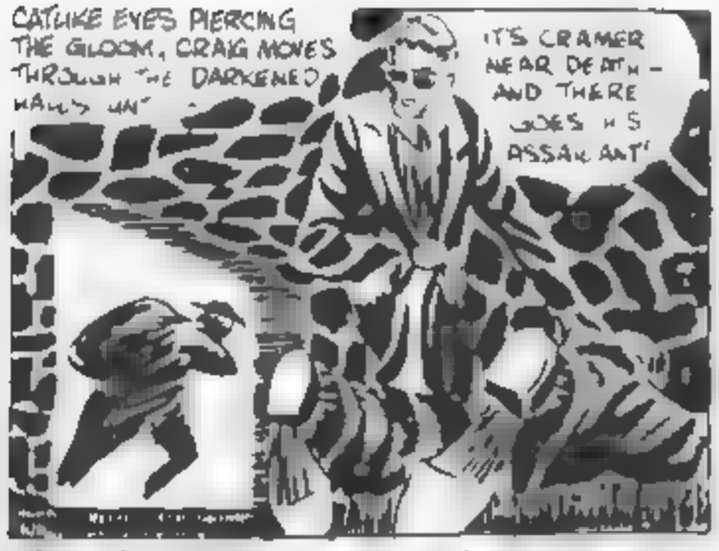
THUMP!

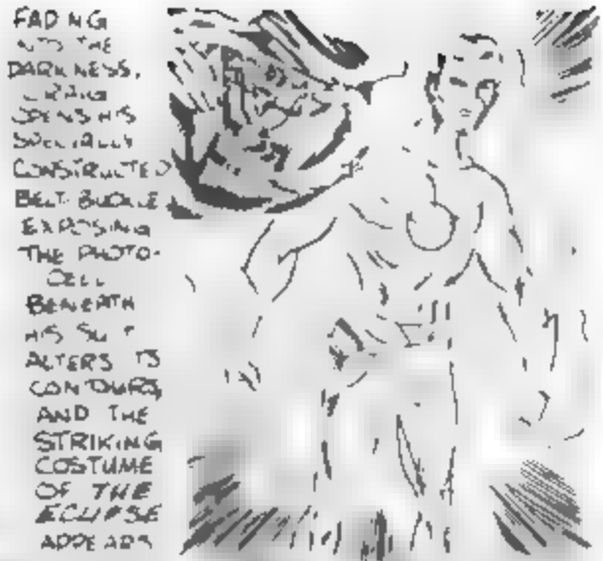
GHOSTLY SOUNDS - MUST BE ON TAPE

OOHHH

ARGH

UH-OH THAT LAST ONE SOUNDS TOO REAL


CATLIKE EYES PIERCING THE GLOOM, CRAIG MOVES THROUGH THE DARKENED HALLS UNT-
IT'S CRAMER NEAR DEATH - AND THERE GOES HIS ASSAILANT!


FADING INTO THE DARKNESS, CRAIG OPENS HIS SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED BELT-BUCKLE EXPOSING THE PHOTO-CELL BENEATH HIS SUIT ALTERS ITS CONTOURS AND THE STRIKING COSTUME OF THE ECLIPSE APPEARS

INSTANTLY, THE MASTER OF MIDNIGHT HOURS UTILIZES HIS NEGATIVE-MATTER ABILITY-
WHA! THROUGH THE WALL-?

NOW WE'LL SEE WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE - UHN!

SECONDS LATER-
ESCAPED! I MIGHT'VE KNOWN THERE'D BE TWO OF THEM. I'D BETTER TAKE A LOOK AT CRAMER AS DR PIERCE"

SHIELDING HIS EYES FROM THE SUDDEN GLARE WHICH HE KNOWS WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR HIM,* CRAIG TURNS ON THE LIGHT -
UHH - FIREBALL... GHOSTLY FIREBALL - HARD TO BREATHE!
EASY, CRAMER - YOUR PULSE IS WEAK BUT WE'LL GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL
*DR PIERCE IS A VICTIM OF CHRONIC LIGHT-SENSITIVITY, A TYPE OF BLINDNESS!

LATER AS DAWN STREAKS THE SKY—
I'M AT JAMESON HOMICIDE! WE LEARNED THAT SOMEONE TRIED TO SUFFOCATE CRAMER WITH POTASSIUM OF CYANIDE. AND HAMILTON GLENN ONE OF YOUR GUESTS HERE WHO WORKS FOR THE TREASURY DEPT, FOUND THERE'S A HALF MILLION DOLLARS MISSING FROM CRAMER'S BOOKS"
YOU'RE CRAMER'S ACCOUNTANT, MR. PHELPS SO I'M ARRESTING YOU ON SUSPICION OF ATTEMPTED MURDER
LATE THAT NIGHT A STRANGELY GARBED FIGURE POURS OVER OLD NEWSPAPER FILES IN THE CRESCENT CITY LIBRARY—
HMMM- WHEN CRAIG PIERCE VISITED JOHN PHELPS IN HIS CELL TODAY, HE MENTIONED THAT ENOS CRAMER HAD WANTED TO BUY MAN MOOR... NOW I CAN SEE WHY!

SHORTLY AT THE MANOR
UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, THIS OLD RELIC IS PROBABLY HONEYCOMBED WITH SECRET PASSAGES
PASSING THROUGH— HMMM SOMEONE ELSE IS ALSO INTERESTED!

ALL RIGHT, YOU— LET'S HAVE AN EXPLAN.. WHA? MISS ASTER!
Ohhh - LET ME GO YOU YOU BRUTE
Y-YOU! YOU'RE THAT CRIME FIGHTER THE ECLIPSE... I'VE READ ABOUT YOU IN THE NEWSPAPERS! I CAME TO LOOK FOR DR PIERCE— HE FANCIES HIMSELF A DETECTIVE OF SORTS.. HAVE YOU SEEN HIM?
NO I'VE NEVER EVER MET THE DOCTOR
WELL, AS LONG AS I'M HERE, I MAY AS WELL HELP YOU. NOW IT'S OBVIOUS THAT MR. PHELPS WAS FRAMED. SO, THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING THE CULPRIT WANTS! BUT WE'RE GOING TO FIND IT FIRST RIGHT?!

T-IT'S UNCANNY!
MONTHS OF PRETTY EMPTY-HEADED BLONDES.
THERE'RE HIDDEN PASSAGES HERE MASTER IF YOU REALLY WANT TO ME, YOU'LL STAY HERE AND ACT AS MY LOOKOUT!!
ECLIPSE YOU LET ME IN THIS INSTANT TO GET RID OF ME THIS EASILY!
OH MY ACHING BACK! SHE'LL ALERT EVERYONE IN THE MANOR WITH THAT INCESSANT POUNDING!
A HIDDEN PANEL! IT-IT'S AWFULLY DARK IN HERE!
SHH- JUST HOLD MY HAND, DARKNESS IS NO PROBLEM TO ME!
SHORTLY DOWN THE DARK PASSAGES-
OH NO-IT'S M.M. AUG-UMPH!
AND THIS TIME YOU WON'T ESCAPE.
HOWEVER AT THAT SAME INSTANT-
HURRAY! I FOUND A LIGHT SWITCH!!
OH-MY EYES!

RECOVERING CONSCIOUSNESS THE PAIR FIND—
A-A SHIMMERING FIREBALL! IT KEEPS GETTING LARGER MAKING ME WEAK
THE MAU'MOOR LEGEND.. IT-IT'S TRUE!
MEANWHILE, NEAR THE HIDDEN DOORWAY LEADING OUT OF THE PASSAGE—
WE WON'T NEED THESE ANYMORE, CYNTHIA M'DONE! AS SOON AS OUR "FIREBALL" HAS DONE ITS JOB, I'LL GO BACK AND GET IT"
NO ONE WILL EVER FIND THEM... NO ONE ELSE KNOWS OF THIS PASSAGE
RATHER CLEVER OF US, ISN'T IT, HAM — JUST THINK ONE MILLION DOLLARS IN PRE-COLONIAL GOLD COINS, AND IT'S ALL OURS!
HA-HAH! THAT'S THE ADVANTAGE OF WORKING FOR THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT—ONE GETS TO KNOW THESE THINGS: OF COURSE, I DIDN'T ELIMINATE CRAMER'S RIVALRY AS I'D PLANNED, BUT AT LEAST WE HAVE THE GOLD TO CONSOLE US!!
AS HAMILTON GLENN AND HIS WIFE PREPARE TO LEAVE—
THERE THEY ARE
THE MODIFIED LASER BEAM EMITS OPAQUE BLACKNESS—
7

THROUGH THE MURKY DARKNESS, ECLIPSE ... *AND* TERESA ASTER – STRIKE!

OH DARN-THERE GOES MY *OTHER* HEEL! BUT IT'S WORTH IT JUST TO PAY MRS. GLENN BACK FOR THAT CRACK ON THE HEAD SHE GAVE ME!

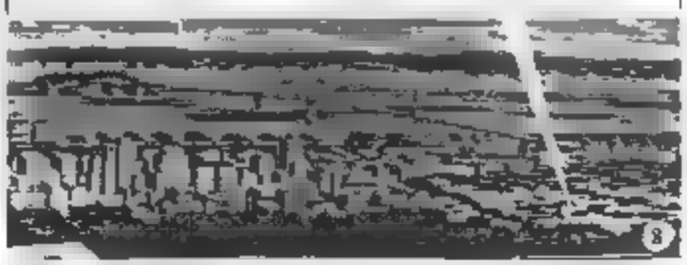
SPIKED HEELS ARE THE HANDIEST THINGS EVER INVENTED, AREN'T THEY, ECLIPSE?! I SHUDDER TO THINK WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED TO US IF I HADN'T WORKED MY SHOE OFF IN TIME TO WEDGE THE SPIKED HEEL INTO THAT CYANIDE-LOADED 'FIREBALL' SMOKE-GENERATOR!!

THE NEXT DAY, A BLISSFUL REUNION TAKES PLACE AT MALIMOOR MANOR–

SO KEMMET MALIMOOR *WAS* A MISER AND BEFORE HIS *NATURAL* DEATH IN 1769, HE HID AWAY A MILLION BUCKS IN GOLD COINS HERE IN A SECRET ROOM–

WHICH ARE NOW WORTH NEARLY FOUR TIMES THAT AMOUNT BECAUSE OF THEIR RARITY, RIGHT LIEUTENANT?

RIGHT, DR. PIERCE! AND ENOS CRAMER FACED RUINATION DUE TO EMBEZZLING A HALF-MILLION FROM HIS OWN BANK, WE LEARNED, TO INVEST IN ONE OF SAM BORDEN'S FAKE 'TRIPLE-YOUR-MONEY' SCHEMES! CRAMER WILL BE ALL RIGHT, BUT HE FACES PRISON FOR EMBEZZLEMENT! WHEN HE LEARNED OF THE MALIMOOR GOLD, HE ASKED HAMILTON GLENN WHAT IT'D BE WORTH *NOW* – WHICH NATURALLY MADE GLENN INTERESTED, AND...

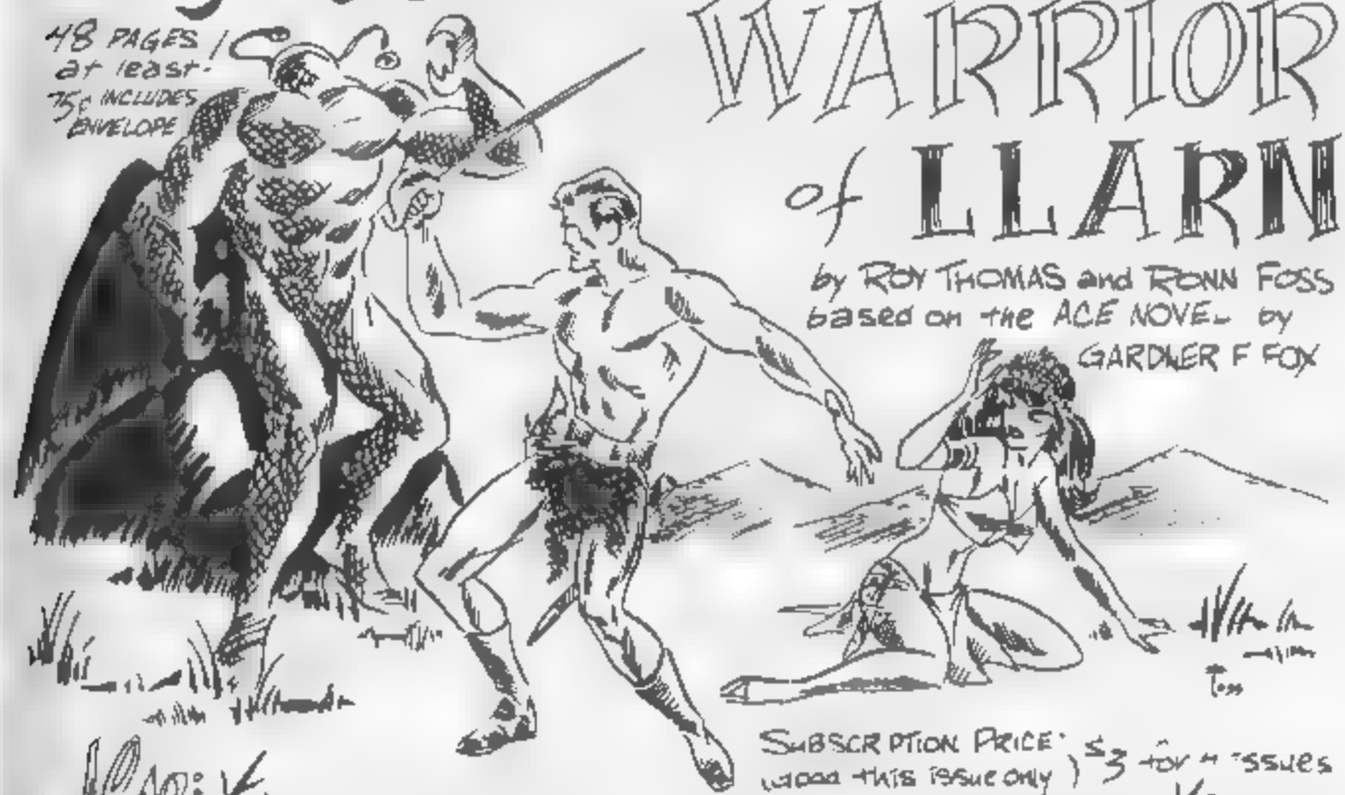


—AND HE SEIZED UPON THE "GHOSTLY FIREBALL" IDEA TO DISPOSE OF HIS COMPETITION FALCON, HE AND HIS WIFE TRIED TO MAKE OFF WITH THE GOLD BEFORE CRAMER COULD RECOVER AND TALK!!
—UNTIL THE ECLIPSE AND I AT THE PRICE OF A GOOD PAIR OF HEELS PUT AN END TO HIS PLANS!
SORRY WE THOUGHT YOU WERE INVOLVED MR. PHELPS
FORGET IT, M— HAPPY NOW THAT —MALMOOR IS CLEARED OF THE LEGEND ALICE DARLING WHAT'S WRONG?
OH I WAS JUST THINKING HOW TASTY WATERMELON WOULD BE!
WATERMELON? BUT THEY'RE OUT OF SEASON ALICE! ARE YOU—
AS YOUR WIFE'S DOCTOR JOHN . D SAY CIGARS ARE IN ORDER
Enos

Coming in AE #9:

Alan Morgan WARRIOR of LLARN

by ROY THOMAS and RONN FOSS
based on the ACE NOVEL by GARDNER F FOX



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Originally appeared in GOSH WOW! #1 (1987) © Foss

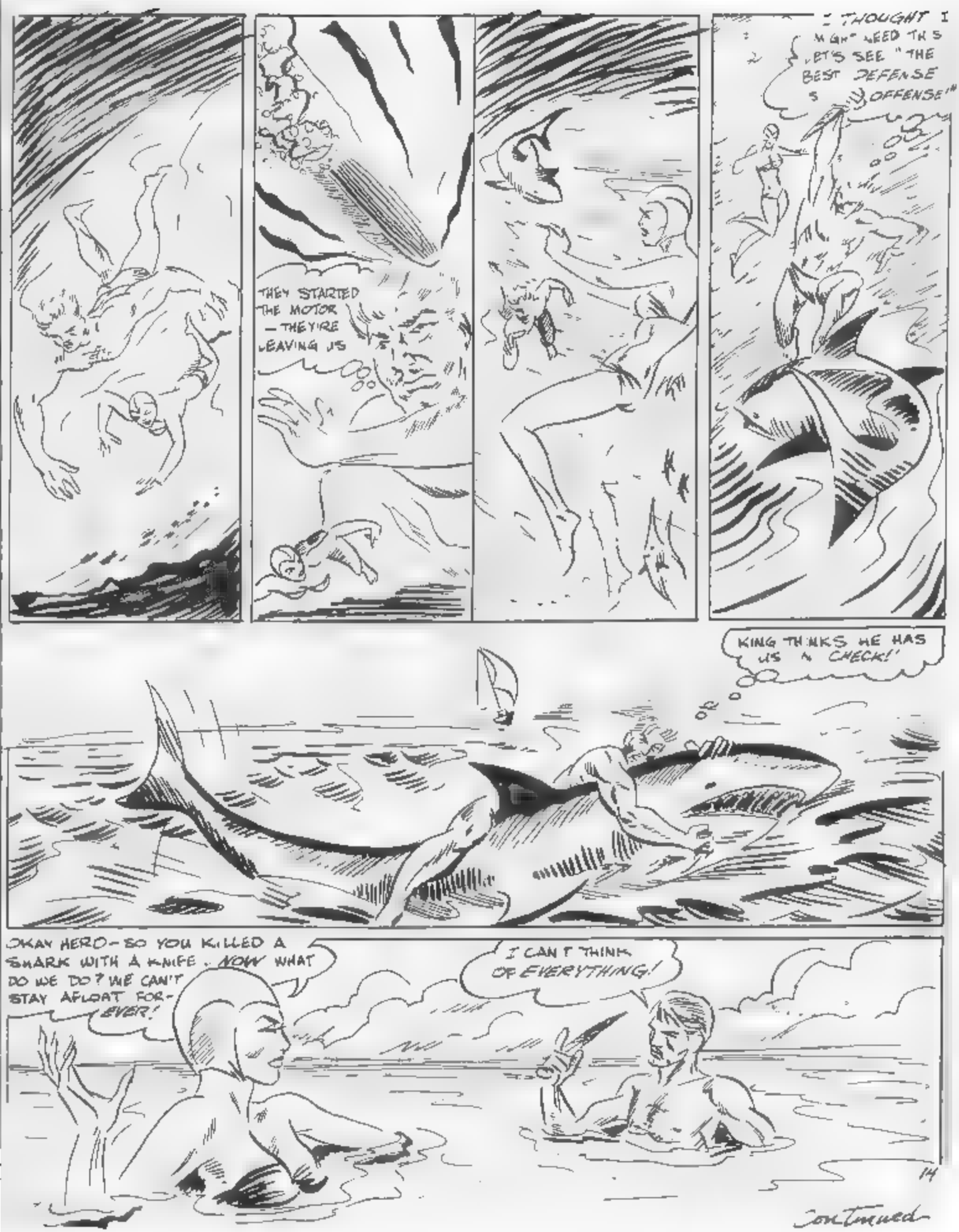
THE
DUST STORM SAILED TO A
LOS ANGELES MAGNA -
AS THE OLD SAYING GOES,
"THIS MUST BE THE PLACE!"
BLACK
KNIGHT
THE FOX,
I PRESUME?
"HAT'S WHAT THEY CALL ME —
AND YOU'RE MADAM JADE?
WHAT'S THE CROWD
GATHERED
FOR?
DOWN
WITH
A DEMONSTRATION OF THE
TOPLESS SWIM SUIT!
DISGUSTING
ISN'T IT?
OFF
WITH

IT DEPENDS UPON ONE'S VIEWPOINT — PERSONALLY, I BELIEVE IN INDIVIDUALISM!
THEN YOU WOULDN'T CONDEMN ANYONE FOR BEING IMPULSIVE?
SO LONG AS NOBODY GETS HURT
YOU'LL PARDON THE INTERRUPTION BECAUSE IT HAPPENS I OWN THIS ■OAT
STORM, I'M SURE YOU'LL RECOGNIZE AN OLD FRIEND OF YOURS —
"DIAMOND STUDD"
MY ONLY FRIEND IS THIS MAGNUM!
I'VE BEEN THINKIN' ABOUT THIS SINCE YOU SENT ME UP, FOX!!
10

THE
FOX
Written & Illustrated by Rocco Fosco
©1966 by R.F.Co.
ABOARD THE 'BLACK KNIGHT', KING CHESSMAN HAS JUST BROUGHT DIAMOND STUDD FACE TO FACE WITH SCOTT—
NOW YOU'LL GET YOURS, STORM!
I MIGHT COST ME A PAWN TO WIN THIS GAME!
YOU'RE AS SLOW AS EVER, STUDD
STOP!
NOW THAT YOU'VE BOTH DECLARED YOUR AFFECTION FOR EACH OTHER, LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS!
I'M NOT HERE TO PLAY GAMES, CHESSMAN—
NOR AM I KING— WHAT'S THE SCORE ANYWAY?
I'VE GATHERED YOU ALL HERE TOGETHER TO FILM THE GREATEST MOTION PICTURE EPIC EVER MADE!!
WITH YOUR PAST NOTORIETY FOR BEING SMUGGLERS AND THIEVES, THE PUBLICITY WILL MAKE THE PICTURE A SMASH HIT!
NOW JUST A MINUTE—
KNIGHT

HE'S NOT REFERRING TO YOU, FOX - THOSE CHOKE TITLES ARE FOR DIAMOND AND I'
OF COURSE, STORM - YOU ARE THEIR NEMESIS!
YOU'LL SIMPLY ALL PLAY YOURSELVES IN THE FILM THE EMERALD GODDESS!
ALL WE LACK IS A LEADING LADY SOMEONE YOU CAN TRUST, NATURALLY.
YEAH - AND I KNOW JUST THE LADY!
CIGARS
Fantastic Films
HERE'S THE SYNOPSIS — YOU, STORM ARE VACATIONING IN SANTA CATALINA ISLAND WHEN YOU DISCOVER MADAM JADE SMUGGLING GEMS FROM HONG KONG ...
San Francisco
Monterey
PACIFIC OCEAN
Los Angeles
San Diego
Tijuana
SHIP SCHMITT
EARLY NEXT MORNING —
MISS DAWN YOU'LL PLAY AN EXOTIC DANCER WHO TRIES TO AID THE FOX!
I HAVE A FEELING THIS IS A PUT-UP JOB, LAURA! STAY CLOSE WHEN THE FILMING STARTS!
DON'T WORRY - I WON'T LEAVE YOUR SHADOW.
Continued

The FOX
...AND THE EPIC EMERALD GODDESS BEGINS IN SANTA CATALINA ISLAND, OFF THE CALIFORNIA COAST WHERE A SUIT IS ON HIM FOR HUNTING
...AND MEETS LAURA DAWN
THEY RELEASE HIM AS A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR AND TELLS HIM...
OF A SMUGGLING OPERATION AFTER THE MILLION DOLLAR EMERALD GODDESS
A WOMAN A MAN THEY ARE HOT TO TRACK A MADAM JADE A WOMAN SMUGGLER
THEY ARE LED TO ORIENTAL SANCTUMS WHERE THEY MEET DIAMOND HOO
WHO PROMISES NO MATTER FOR THE FOX HOW MADAM JADE HERSELF IS AT HAND
BUT WE ABOUT TO SURRENDER THE DEADLESS FIGURINE THE DRUMS THROW A CORAL REEF
THE FOX
UNDERWATER IT IS SOUGHT BY THE FOX AND LAURA DAWN
WE HAD TO COME THIS FAR OUT SO THE CAMERA WOULDN'T FILM ANY LAND AREAS! NOW JUST GET USED TO THE WATER THEN WE'LL PHOTOGRAPH YOU GOING UNDER
DIAMOND WILL WATCH FOR SHARKS JUST IN CASE!!

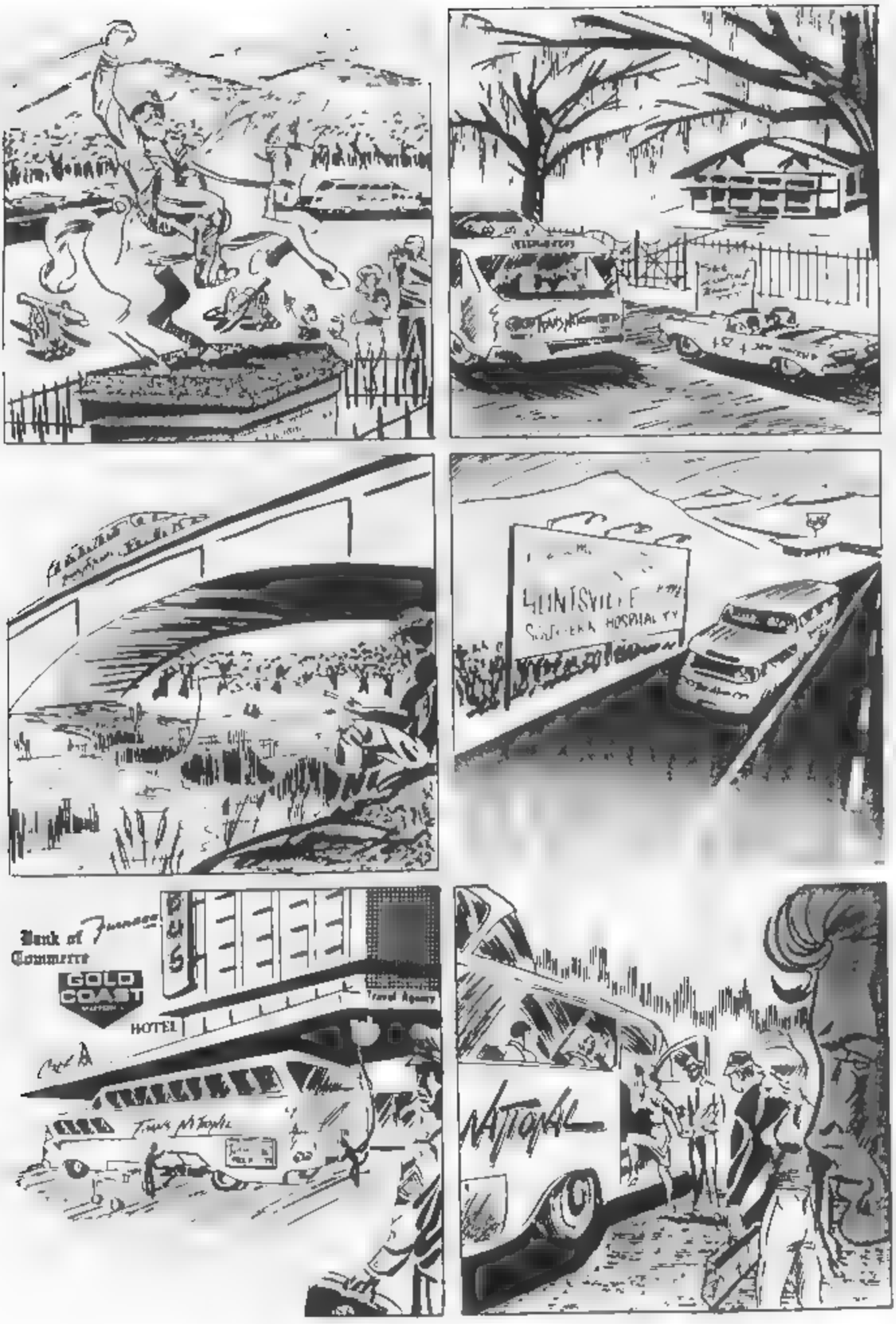

THEY STARTED THE MOTOR — THEY'RE LEAVING US
I THOUGHT I MIGHT NEED THIS LET'S SEE "THE BEST DEFENSE IS OFFENSE!"
KING THINKS HE HAS US IN CHECK!
OKAY HERO — SO YOU KILLED A SHARK WITH A KNIFE. NOW WHAT DO WE DO? WE CAN'T STAY AFLOAT FOR-EVER!
I CAN'T THINK OF EVERYTHING!

continued

the ORIGIN of The BLACK PHANTOM

STORY BY STEVE PERRIN
ART BY RONN FOSS
LETTERING BY BILL SPICER
NIGGER. KIKE. WOP INJUN.. GOOK. GREASER. PAPIST. ALL OF THESE ARE LABELS PUT ON OTHERS BY THE HATERS THE PEOPLE WHO MUST DEGRADE THEIR FELLOW MEN BECAUSE THEY FEAR THEM FOR TOO LONG SOCIETY HAS TOLERATED AND EVEN ENCOURAGED THESE BLIGHTS UPON THE STANCHION OF MANKIND. AND NOW THE VICTIMS ARE RISING..
AMONG THESE INSURGENTS IS A FIGHTER FOR EQUALITY WHO PROWLS THE NIGHT, THE ANNONYMITY OF A MASK DISGUISING HIS RACE..
the BLACK PHANTOM

Originally appeared in FANTASY ILLUSTRATED #5 (1966) © Foss


Bank of Commerce
GOLD COAST
HOTEL
NATIONAL

ONE MORNING A YOUNG MAN IS ABOUT TO BOARD A TRANS-NATIONAL BUS, WHEN...
HOL' ON THEAH, MAN...
OK
HUH?
ATLANTIC FEDERAL SAVINGS
DRUG STORE
SHOPPING CENTER
I'M SORRY DRIVER I THOUGHT YOU'D KNOW ME--
OH SO YOU'AH JOEY TRAGER!
AH ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT TRANS-NATIONALS BOY HERO LOOKED LIKE-
Motors, Inc.
JEWELERS
PASS
THE TWO STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION ONCE THE BUS IS ON ITS WAY...
MAN, AH M SORRY AH DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU--AH'VE ALWAYS WONDERED WHEAH YOU PICKED UP THAT PASS, ANYWAY...
OH, I WARNED A BUS ONCE THAT WAS ABOUT TO CROSS A BRIDGE THAT WASN'T THERE ANYMORE. THIS WAS WHEN THE COMPANY WAS JUST STARTING, ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO, AND THE OWNER ASKED WHAT I WANTED AS A REWARD--
MY FOLKS WERE DEAD, SO I ASKED FOR A PASS THAT WOULD LET ME TRAVEL WHEREVER I WANTED. I CAN USE IT 'TIL I'M TWENTY-ONE.
IF IT HAD BEEN A NEGRO BOY HE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN A SHINY HALF-DOLLAR, A PAT ON THE HEAD, AND THEN FORGOTTEN.
OH, COME ON NOW, I DON'T--
HEY, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ACCENT!?
WELL, I'LL TELL YOU, KID-- SETTLE BACK FOR A STORY THAT'S SHORT AND SWEET...
MOBILE
Cadillac
USED CARS
"US CIGARETTE FIGHTERS WOULD RATHER SMOKE THAN DRINK!"
Exotic Gardens
Gallery
Allied TRUCKING
5.37
TRANS NATIONAL

"THREE YEARS AGO ONE LAFAYETTE JEFFERSON--THAT'S ME--GRADUATED FROM THE CALIFORNIA NSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY..."
" THE NEXT TWO YEARS I SPENT WITH OL UNCLE SAM "
"THEN I TOOK MY DEGREE IN MICRO-ENGINEERING AND MARCHED TO THE CAPTAINS OF AMERICAN INDUSTRY, READY TO ACCEPT A JOB AMONG THEIR STAFFS..."
"EVERYWHERE I WENT I GOT THE SAME THING. I WAS 'TOO OLD' OR 'TOO YOUNG', OR 'WRONG REFERENCES OR 'WASN'T COMPATIBLE. EVERY REASON IN THE BOOK EXCEPT THE REAL ONE... I WAS A NEGRO AND NO ONE WITH A BLACK SKIN IS NEEDED FOR WHITE COLLAR JOBS... AT LEAST, NOT THE KIND I WANTED, ANYWAY..."
AUTOMATION, INC.
MANPOWER, INC.
INSTITUTE of ELECTRONICS
"SO I FINALLY FELL BACK ON THE WORK I'D DONE WHILE GETTING THROUGH SCHOOL AND APPLIED FOR A JOB HERE..."
FRANKLY, WITH YOUR QUALIFICATIONS YOU SHOULD BE IN A JOB A HUNDRED TIMES BETTER THAN THIS, BUT WE'RE ONE OF THE FEW COMPANIES THAT WILL HIRE NEGROES FOR THIS BIG A JOB. WE'LL BE GLAD TO HAVE YOU UNTIL YOU CAN BREAK INTO THE KIND OF WORK YOU SHOULD HAVE.

SO, I GOT THIS JOB AND I KEEP MY HAND IN WITH ENGINEERING IN MY SPARE TIME. IT'S A GOOD JOB I HAVE QUITE A BIT OF TIME OFF, AND I SEE THE COUNTRY...

GOSH MR. JEFFERSON I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T JUST GIVEN UP BECAUSE NO ONE YOU ASKED WOULD HIRE YOU. THERE MUST BE SOME PLACE THAT WILL HIRE A PERSON BECAUSE OF ABILITY AND NOT APPEARANCE...

TRANSNATIONAL

EVEN IF I GOT THAT JOB I'D HAVE TO WORK FIVE TIMES HARDER THAN ANY WHITE MAN JUST TO KEEP IT. NO, AS LONG AS PEOPLE FEAR SOMEONE WHO'S DIFFERENT AND FIGHT TO KEEP THESE DIFFERENT PEOPLE IN A POSITION WHERE THEY CAN'T HAVE SELF RESPECT, THERE WON'T BE MANY WHITE COLLARS ON BLACK NECKS...

SO HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET THIS RESPECT FOR YOUR 'FEARED' RACE?

BY SHOVING OURSELVES DOWN WHITE THROATS. IT'S NOT THE BEST WAY, MAYBE, NOR THE MOST EFFECTIVE, BUT WE HAVE TO DO IT-- WE'RE PROVING THAT WE DON'T LIKE TO BE STEPPED ON AND WE'RE HITTING THE HATERS BACK WHERE IT HURTS IN THEIR WALLETS.

Ain't America the land of opportunity for you! comfort?

I WORK WITH THE N.A.A.C.P. WHEN I'M OFF DUTY. I'M HEADING DOWN FOR A LITTLE TOWN IN ALABAMA RIGHT NOW, AS SOON AS THIS BUS REACHES ITS DESTINATION. AS FOR THE ACCENT IT'S WHAT'S EXPECTED OF US BLACK BUS DRIVERS..

OH, AND CALL ME *LAFE*, WILL YOU?

SURE, LAFE. YOU KNOW, ONE OF THE REASONS I'VE BEEN TRAVELLING IS THAT I WANTED TO FIND OUT ABOUT WHAT MAKES MY COUNTRY TICK. I THINK YOU'RE A PART OF A TICKING THAT'S LIKELY TO GO OFF LIKE A BOMB, AND I WANT TO SEE IT. HOW ABOUT LETTING ME GO WITH YOU?

LAFE CONSIDERS THE OFFER FOR A FEW MOMENTS, THEN...

OKAY, MAN, YOU'RE ON! MAYBE WE CAN SHOW BOTH SIDES OF HATERS, BLACK AND WHITE THAT THERE IS A COMMON GROUND IF ONLY YOU LOOK FOR IT!

TRANSNATIONAL

SO ALL OF A SUDDEN IT'S "WE". WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING, AND WHY DO YOU USE THAT DARKIE ACCENT?

TWO DAYS LATER, LAFE S OFF D.TY AND THE TWO TRAVELERS ARE ON BOARD A LOCAL BUS BOUND FOR THE SMALL CITY OF NEW BEAUREGARD, ALABAMA...
I DON'T GET T, LAFE. HOW COME THERE AREN'T OTHER NEGROES N THE BACK WITH US? WE -- OR YOU -- ARE THE ONLY ONE ON THE BUS.
I DON'T L KE T MYSELF, JOE I'VE HEARD THAT NEGRO TRAVELERS TO THIS TOWN WEREN'T WELCOME, BUT I HAD NO DEA IT WAS THIS BAD.
Super Dept.
THE WELCOME S EVEN LESS WARM THAN LAFE EXPECTS.
HOLD T NIGGER...
WE DON'T NEED ANY MORE OF YOU. NOW, I'VE GOT TICKETS HERE FOR THE NEXT TOWN, SO SUPPOSE YOU JUS' STAY ABOARD...
WHATAYA MEAN? WE LL GET--
NEVAH MIND, BOY.
Cadillac
USED CARS
ATLANTIC FEDERAL SAVING
YESSUH, WE'LL BE GO'N ON. THANK YOU, SUH.
YOU GOT THE RIGHT DEA, SPADE. AND MAKE SUAH YOUR LOUD MOUTHED WHITE FRIEND STAYS IN TOW- WE GOT NO USE FUH HIM IN THIS TOWN, EITHAH...
news
Paint
OVERBROOK
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "GO'N ON?" ARE YOU GOING TO LET HIM GET AWAY WITH THIS?
I LEARNED LONG AGO THAT AS LONG AS A WHITE MAN THINKS YOU'RE FOLLOWING ORDERS, HE'LL IGNORE YOU. THE DRIVER IS A FRIEND OF MINE AND HE'LL LET US OFF A MILE OR SO UP AHEAD. THEN WE'LL HEAD BACK AND NOBODY WILL EVER NOTICE WE'RE NEW HERE.
BEAUREGARD NEW
RACIAL VIOLENCE SPREADS
BOMBING
SURE ENOUGH, THAT NIGHT LAFE AND JOEY MEET WITH NAACP OFFICERS...
MR. JEFFERSON I M AFRAID THAT THIS TOWN WILL HAVE TO BE ABANDONED.
BUT WHY? I THOUGHT THERE WAS A FULL-SCALE OFFENSIVE GO NG ON HERE.

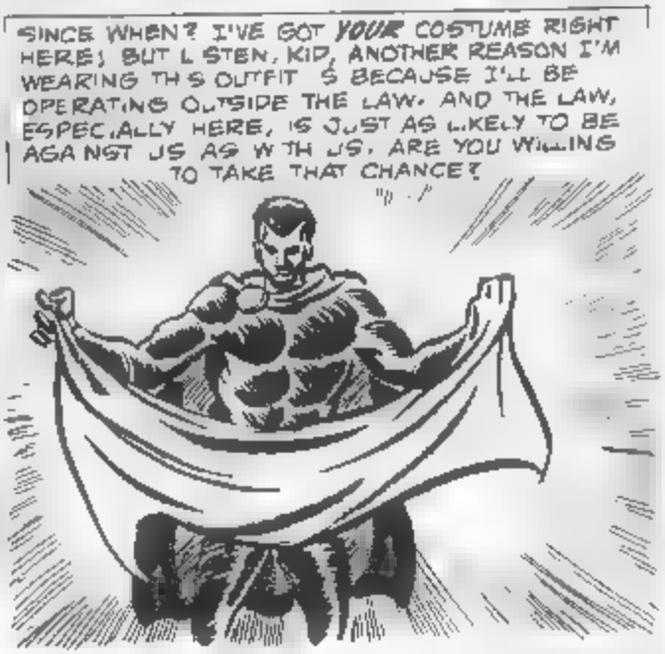
"OUR OFFENSIVE HAS RUN UP AGAINST A LOCAL BLITZKRIEG. THE LOCAL CITIZENRY HAS ORGANIZED A TERRORIST-GROUP CALLED THE BROTHERS OF THE FLAMING CROSS. THEY'VE SHOT UP OUR STANDS, BEATEN AND MURDERED OUR PEOPLE TRYING TO GET NEGRO VOTERS TOGETHER AND TERRORIZED THE COUNTRYSIDE. WE'VE LOST TWENTY WORKERS BUT THEY HAVE THE COMMUNICATIONS SEWED UP SO WELL IN THIS TOWN THAT NO REAL NEWS CAN ESCAPE. WE'RE REALLY DESPERATE, MR. JEFFERSON..."
BAM
Atlantis
Jefferson
TRADE IN
KING OLDSMO
NON-VIOLENT

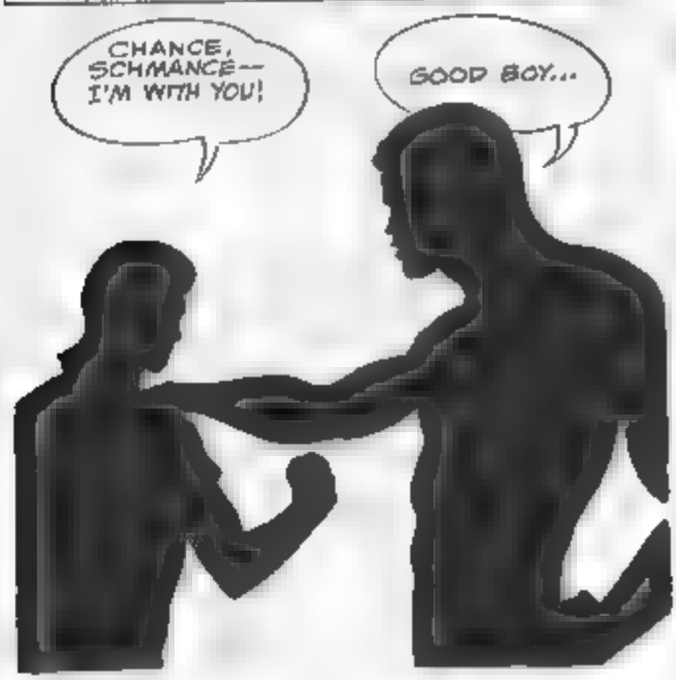
WELL, IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THE POLICE SUPPORT THESE TERRORISTS. I THINK THAT—
LAFE! EVERYBODY! THERE'S A BUNCH OF CHARACTERS IN WHITE ROBES COMING IN HERE.
THEY'VE FOUND US!
THE NEXT MORNING LOOKS UPON A SCENE OF DEVASTATION
ANOTHER ACCIDENTAL FIRE, EH?
OF COURSE, I'M NOT ABOUT TO TANGLE WITH THE BROTHERHOOD-- BESIDES, I THINK MOST OF THESE PEOPLE GOT AWAY. I'M AFRAID, THOUGH, THAT EQUALITY WILL BE AMONG THE MISSING AROUND HERE FOR QUITE A FEW MORE YEARS.
WELL THAT DID IT JOE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN LAFE? YOU MEAN THIS MAY BE FOR US TO GO ON?
Negroes To March:
Protection Plea
NO, I MEANT-- WELL, WAIT AND I'LL SHOW YOU. GOT SOMETHING HERE I'VE BEEN SAVING FOR THE RIGHT TIME.
SURE LAFE...
NOW MAYBE I'LL FIND OUT WHAT LAFE'S GOT IN THAT EXTRA CASE...

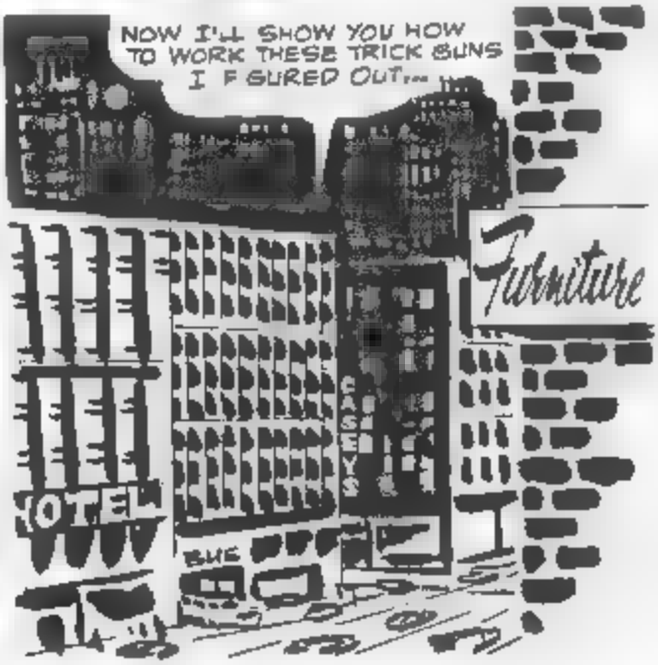
LAFE HAS QUITE A SURPRISE FOR JOEY IN THAT CASE...
WOW WHAT A WILD LOOKING OUTFIT! BUT WHAT'S IT FOR?
IT'S FOR CASES LIKE THIS WHEN THOSE WHO TAKE ANOTHER'S RESPECT NEED A LESSON IN GOOD MANNERS. YOU MIGHT CALL IT THE FRUIT OF MY LABORS IN ENGINEERING

BUT WHY ARE YOU PUTTING IT ON? AND WHAT'S THAT GUN FOR? I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE LIKE IT BEFORE.
THIS IS SOMETHING I'VE SAVED FOR JUST SUCH AN OCCASION-- WITH THIS MASK OVER MY FACE I CAN AVENGE MY FRIENDS AND STRIKE A BLOW FOR THEM WITHOUT FEAR OF RETRIBUTION TO MY FRIENDS AND RELATIVES..

WELL, THIS IS A HELL OF A DEAL!
HOLD YOUR HORSES, JOE...
"HOLD YOUR HORSES" NOTHIN'! I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS, BUT NOW YOU WON'T LET ME COME WITH YOU!


SINCE WHEN? I'VE GOT YOUR COSTUME RIGHT HERE! BUT LISTEN, KID, ANOTHER REASON I'M WEARING THIS OUTFIT IS BECAUSE I'LL BE OPERATING OUTSIDE THE LAW. AND THE LAW, ESPECIALLY HERE, IS JUST AS LIKELY TO BE AGAINST US AS WITH US. ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE THAT CHANCE?


CHANCE, SCHMANCE-- I'M WITH YOU!
GOOD BOY...


NOW I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO WORK THESE TRICK GUNS I FIGURED OUT...
Furniture
HOTEL
CASEY'S
BUS

"THESE GUNS ARE SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW..."
"THE HANDLE AND BUTT OF THE GUN HAVE A SERIES OF SMALL CONTAINERS THAT HOLD GASSES AT HIGH PRESSURE..."
"YOU SET THE SELECTOR AND IT WILL SHOOT OUT ONE GAS, WHICH TURNS INTO A HIGH-PRESSURE STREAM OF WATER UPON CONTACT WITH AIR..."
"THIS ONE HERE RELEASES AN ACID... CAPABLE OF BURNING THROUGH MOST ANY SOLID MATTER... INCLUDING STEEL..."
"THIS ONE RELEASES TEAR GAS PELLETS..."
"ANOTHER WILL DISPENSE A CLOUD OF HARMLESS SMOKE TO HIDE OUR MOVEMENTS"
"STILL ANOTHER RELEASES A SPECIAL LIQUID SUBSTANCE WHICH FORMS ITSELF INTO A PLASTIC ROPE..."
... OF TREMENDOUS STRENGTH!
ALSO, OUR CAPES WILL ABSORB LIGHT RAYS WITH ABSOLUTELY NO REFLECTION TO MARK US. THIS ALLOWS US TO LITERALLY DISAPPEAR INTO ANY SHADOWS WE RUN ACROSS.
HOLY COW, WITH THESE GADGETS THOSE WHITE SHEETED HOODS WON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST US! BUT JUST WHO ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BE IN THESE GETUPS -- A REVIVAL OF CAPTAIN MARVEL SENIOR AND JUNIOR?
WE'LL BE TRAVELERS BY NIGHT, STRIKING AND FADING AWAY, LIKE GHOSTS. SO I'M CALLING MYSELF THE BLACK PHANTOM. AS FOR YOU, HOW DOES THE WRAITH STRIKE YOU?
IT STRIKES ME THAT BLACK PHANTOM AND WRAITH ARE GOING TO HAVE THESE HATE MONGERS HIDING UNDER THOSE SHEETS!

THAT NIGHT, THE NEW TEAM OF BLACK PHANTOM AND WRAITH GO INTO ACTION...
I FOUND OUT THAT THIS IS THE LOCAL POLICE CHIEF'S PLACE--WE CAN BE PRETTY SURE THAT HE'LL KNOW WHERE TO RUN DOWN THE BROTHERS--WHETHER HE WANTS TO OR NOT.
I CAN HEAR HIM COMING. HIS WIFE DOESN'T WANT HIM GOING OUT AGAIN, BUT HE'S GOING ANYWAY.
WELL, MAYBE WE CAN CHANGE HIS MIND--
WAIT A MINUTE- WHAT'S THIS ON THE BED-
WELL, I'LL BE! WE SHOULD HAVE GUESSED THAT HE WAS A MEMBER!
THIS CHANGES MATTERS--OUT THE WINDOW, QUICK, AND WE'LL "HITCH" A RIDE TO WHERE THESE GUYS ARE MEETING TONIGHT.
WITH BLACK PHANTOM AND WRAITH AS STOWAWAYS IN THE CAR'S TRUNK, THE DISGUISED POLICE CHIEF BRINGS HIS OWN NEMESIS TO THE ENCLAVE OF HATRED...
WE'LL HIT THEM FROM TWO SIDES. YOU GET ABOUT TWENTY YARDS OFF TO THE RIGHT, THERE, AND FIRE YOUR SMOKE CHARGE INTO THEM WHEN YOU'RE READY. I'LL JOIN YOU THEN...
OKAY BOSS--SEE YOU SOON!
TIME PASSES. THE MEETING CONTINUES, UNEVENTFUL...
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO WRAITH? IT'S BEEN FIFTEEN MINUTES...

SUDDENLY...
HEY CHIEF LOOK WHAT I FOUND. I CAUGHT THIS CHARACTER ABOUT TO TAKE A SHOT AT US FROM THE WOODS!
FOOL HOW MANY TIMES MUST YOU BE TOLD TO ADDRESS ME AS:
WHA--?!
NICE SHOT BOSS--NOW LET'S TURN THESE WORMS.

THE BROTHERS OF THE FLAMING CROSS, NOT USED TO SUCH VIOLENT OPPOSITION, FALL BEFORE THE FISTS AND WEAPONS OF THE NEWLY-UNITED FIGHTING DUO...

FINALLY...
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I'M THE BLACK PHANTOM AND THIS MY PARTNER THE WRATH. ALL WE WANT'S FOR YOU TO LET THE NAACP AND OTHERS WORK HERE IN THIS TOWN WITHOUT FEAR OF BODILY HARM...
..I REALIZE THAT THE ONLY REASON YOU'VE RESORTED TO FORCE IS BECAUSE JUSTICE IS NOT ON YOUR SIDE. BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO LET THE BLIND LADY DECIDE AFTER ALL, OR WE'LL RETURN AND YOU'LL HAVE MORE THAN JUST BRUISED CHINS AND RUNNY EYES TO WORRY ABOUT!
YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH THIS-- THE BROTHERS ARE EVERYWHERE! YOU WON'T LAST A WEEK, NIGGER LOVER!
WE'LL TAKE THAT CHANCE. JUST REMEMBER THAT IF I HEAR OF YOUR ACTIVITIES AGAIN, YOU'RE ALL AS GOOD AS DEAD...
PSHHH
A WEEK LATER THE BROTHERS HAD NOT MADE A MOVE, SO LAFE HEADS BACK FOR HIS JOB...
WELL, I GUESS WE REALLY SHOWED THEM! THEY WON'T BE TROUBLING ANYBODY AGAIN!
YEAH SURE, K.D...
Mississippi Convicts White Of Negro Rape
257
TRANSMIT
HE'S YOUNG AND DOESN'T TAKE THAT CHARACTER'S THREAT SERIOUSLY. BUT I DO-- BLACK PHANTOM DIDN'T WIN ANYTHING, HE JUST JOINED THE FIGHT. THIS IS GOING TO BE A STRUGGLE THAT WILL TAKE THE REST OF MY LIFE, AND PROBABLY JOE'S TOO, IF HE STILL WANTS TO STICK IT OUT. IT'LL BE A LONG WAR, AND I HOPE THAT BLACK PHANTOM AND WRAITH CAN PROVE THEMSELVES EQUAL TO THE TASK...
AND SO, THE BATTLE IS JOINED. WHERE AND WHEN WILL COME THE NEXT BATTLE OF THE UNKNOWN WAR? IT WILL COME WHEN IT MUST, AND THE BLACK PHANTOM WILL AGAIN JOIN IN COMBAT AGAINST THE BROTHERS OF THE FLAMING CROSS!

Originally appeared in RIP OFF COMIX

Kingdigue™
STOP! You can't come in HERE
THERE'S BEEN A FOUL-UP... I'VE GOTTA MAKE A TRANSFER!
©85 Fox
I DON'T LIKE IT ANY MORE THAN YOU DO — WHY COULDN'T ME JUST SEND 'EM DOWN?
BUT NOOOO... I GOTTA COME UP HERE PERSONALLY AND ESCORT 'EM BACK!
- Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow
LET'S GO!
IT'S A MISTAKE — HONEST... I WAS ONLY ACTING!

Lingerique ™
EVERY WEEK, HE GETS SACRIFICES, NOT ME!
FOR DECADES GENERATIONS, MILLENIA, HE GETS EVERYTHING!
FIFTY THREE TIMES A YEAR THEY GIVE HIM WHAT THEY HOLD DEAREST!
KEEP IT! JUST SEND ME ALL THE VIRGINS!!
If you really want some of all the money HE gets, we'll give it to you...
©'85

THE FLASH
RONNI FOSS

"Witch Hunt" originally appeared in COMIC CRUSADER #12 (1971)

...STILL ANOTHER CO-ED WAS BRUTALLY MURDERED TONIGHT— HER NUDE BODY FOUND BY POLICE WITH A DAGGER IN HER HEART, IDENTICAL WITH OTHER KNIVES THAT HAVE KILLED TWO YOUNG GIRLS THIS YEAR! AUTHORITIES SUSPECT SEX-SLAYING... IN WASHINGTON—

GOOD HEAVENS THREE GIRLS DEAD AND THE POLICE APPEAR UNABLE TO CAPTURE THE KILLER!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT'S THE WORK OF A SINGLE KILLER TESS - NOR A PSYCHOPATH! THIS RECURRANCE SOUNDS LIKE PREMEDITATION THE WORK OF A 'DEATH CULT, MOST LIKELY... WITCHCRAFT!

AT THE HOME OF DR CRAIG PIERCE..

THE

WITCHCRAFT? DR PIERCE, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS? WITCHCRAFT DIED OUT OVER 200 YEARS AGO IN ENGLAND AND SALEM!

QUITE THE CONTRARY, WICCA, AS WITCHCRAFT IS CALLED BY ITS PRACTITIONERS IS THRIVING TODAY AS NEVER BEFORE ALL OVER THE WORLD ALTHOUGH YOU MAY NOT HEAR MUCH OF IT UNLESS YOU GOT PERSONALLY INVOLVED WITH IT!

FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE
PSYCHIC SCIENCE
WITCHCRAFT & DEMONOLOGY
BOOK OF THE DEAD
BLACK ARTS
MYSTICISMS

THE TERM WITCHCRAFT COMES FROM ANGLO-SAXON WICCE-CRAEFT, MEANING WISE CRAFT!

SEX REPRESSION IN THE MIDDLE AGES IS SUSPECTED OF CAUSING THE *INQUISITION*, AND SINCE THE *FOURTEENTH CENTURY*, SOME 200,000 WERE TORTURED MERCILESSLY AND DIED, 100,000 IN GERMANY ALONE! SO-CALLED *DEMONIC POSSESSION*, FOR WHICH MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE WERE PUT TO DEATH, BECAME RECOGNIZED AS HYSTERIA, AND THE SYMPTOMS ARE IDENTICAL TO WHAT WE KNOW TODAY AS SCHIZOPHRENIA!

I HAD NO IDEA YOU'D RESEARCHED THE SUBJECT SO DEEPLY
I FIND THE OCCULT FASCINATING ALMOST TO THE POINT OF OBSESSION.
I WISH HE WERE AS FASCINATED AND OBSESSED BY ME!
IF SHE ONLY KNEW I WASN'T BLIND - I WISH I COULD TELL HER HOW LOVELY SHE IS!
THEN WHAT'S THE NOTORIOUS BLACK MASS?
IT'S A PARODY OF THE CHURCH MASS WHERE WITCHES GATHER IN A RUINED CHURCH, PERFORMING SACRELIGIOUS RITUAL!
FIRST YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE WITCHCRAFT... THE LATTER IS MOST COMMON TODAY AND ITS ADVOCATES DENOUNCE THE FORMER AS EVIL, SERVING SATAN!
I'VE RECORDED THE KILLINGS ON A CALENDAR AND THE DATES COINCIDE WITH SEASONAL EQUINOX AND SOLSTICE
THEN IT ALL MAKES SENSE! WHY HAVEN'T YOU GONE TO THE AUTHORITIES ABOUT THIS?
I CAN PREDICT THE NEXT ONE!
BECAUSE I HAVE NO PROOF! IT'S JUST A THEORY - A SUSPICION THAT WOULD BE RIDICULED BY EVERYONE WHO KNOWS LITTLE OR NOTHING ABOUT WITCHCRAFT!
AS THE PAIR WALK IN THE PARK NEXT DAY—
TESS-TESSASTER, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE COLLEGE TOGETHER - IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME!
NOT LONG ENOUGH, YOU ROMEO!
HELLO, TONY - HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?
31

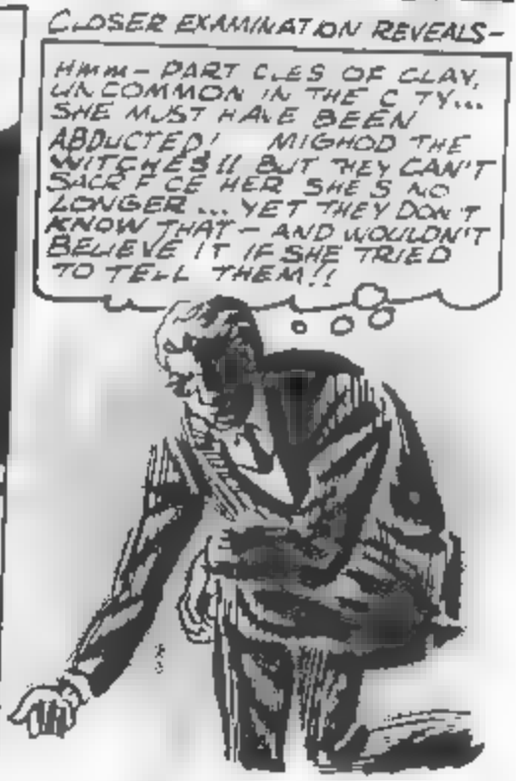
LOST WITHOUT YOU, DEAR! OH THERE HAVE BEEN OTHERS OF COURSE BUT NONE SUCH AS YOU! UH- WHO'S THE FRIEND?
THIS IS DR CRAIG PIERCE THE EMINENT SEROLOGIST AND I'M ASSIGNED TO HIM BY THE DEPT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE!
GOOD. THEN HE'S NO COMPETITION! WHY DON'T YOU AND I GET TOGETHER SOME NIGHT? WE COULD RENEW OLD ACQUAINTANCES. AND-
SORRY, BUT CRAIG - DR. PIERCE REQUIRES MY FULL TIME AND ATTENTION BESIDES I STILL DON'T THINK I WANT TO KNOW YOU ANY BETTER!!
YOU'VE NEVER GIVEN ME A CHANCE - YOU MIGHT FIND YOU LIKE ME ... MANY OTHERS HAVE YOU KNOW!
I'M NOT MANY OTHERS AND I'LL THANK YOU TO STAY OUT OF MY LIFE!
STILL THE STUCK-UP VIRGIN AREN'T YOU? YOU'D NEVER LET A MAN LOVE YOU NOT REALLY! YOU'RE SATISFIED WITH YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH A BLIND MAN... OH YES, I CAN SEE IT-
THAT'S ALL, BROTHER!
- HOW COULD HE... ?
YOUR VOICE DIRECTED ME! NOW GET OUT OF HERE AND LEAVE TESS -MISS ASTER ALONE, BEFORE I...
KEEP THE CHANGE
YOU'LL DIE A VIRGIN, TESS - MARK MY WORDS!
4

OH CRAIG— YOU WERE... WONDERFUL... I'M SO EMBARASSED
DON'T BE SILLY TESS HIS TRADE ARE OBNOXIOUS— NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.. BUT I WON'T LET HIM BOTHER YOU AGAIN!
HE SAID IT AGAIN —TESS!
I DARE NOT— ALMOST GAVE MYSELF AWAY, ATTACKING LIKE THAT!
THAT NIGHT—
VIRGIN! OF COURSE! THE MISSING LINK IN THE CHAIN OF EVENTS! I'VE GOT TO CHECK IT...
TESS, I— THAT IS...
CRAIG—
-I SIMPLY CAN'T CONTAIN MYSELF ANYMORE.. BEING TOGETHER ALL THIS TIME, JUST A ROOM AWAY FROM EACH OTHER EVERY NIGHT —I LAY AWAKE THINKING THAT ... WE — CRAIG, I LOVE YOU!
TERESA, OH MY DEAREST— I'VE BEEN SUCH A FOOL, DENYING MYSELF . AND YOU, ALL THIS TIME, SO CLOSE — AND YET SO FAR...
CRAIG, MY DARLING —
JUST BEFORE DAWN IN THE CITY MORGUE
I THOUGHT SO; THE CORONER'S REPORT LISTS EACH OF THE VICTIMS BEING VIRGIN, SO THEY WERE SACRIFICED!
WANTED
BY THE FBI
MEANWHILE, AT THE PIERCE MANSION—
HURRY—, IT'S ALMOST SUNRISE... WE'LL BE SEEN!
DO
5

SHORTLY, ECLIPSE RETURNS-

HOPE TESS DIDN'T WAKE UP AND FIND ME GONE! I MAY AS WELL MAKE COFFEE-
-AND REVERTS TO CRAIG PIERCE AS EXPOSING A PHOTO-CELL WITHIN HIS BELT BUCKLE ALTERING HIS COSTUME TO A SUIT!

CLOSER EXAMINATION REVEALS-


HMM- PART CLES OF CLAY, UNCOMMON IN THE CITY... SHE MUST HAVE BEEN ABDUCTED! MIGHOD THE WITCHES!! BUT THEY CAN'T SACRIFICE HER SHE'S NO LONGER ... YET THEY DON'T KNOW THAT - AND WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT IF SHE TRIED TO TELL THEM!!

FOR MOST OF THE DAY, CRAIG STUDIES GEOLOGY MAPS AND TOPOGRAPHY CHARTS-

ONLY ONE COUNTY HAS THIS TYPE OF SOIL, AND THERE'S AN ABANDONED OLD CHURCH THERE! THEY AREN'T WAITING UNTIL THE WINTER SOLSTICE!!

HEAR ME, DARK ANGEL... WE OFFER STILL ANOTHER YOUNG INNOCENT TO YOU, THAT WE MAY HAVE MORE POWER TO DO YOUR WORK!
LIVE SPELLED BACK-WARDS IS EVIL!
TONY! I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN HOW COULD YOU? ALL THOSE GIRLS...
I MUST, TO INCREASE MY POWER WE'RE READY TO BE G.N. ANOTHER COVEN, AND IT REQUIRES POTENT METAPHYSICAL VIBRATIONS OFFERED TO OUR COSMIC FORCE THAT ONLY YOU CAN SUPPLY, DEAR VIRGIN!
BUT-BUT I'M NOT. NOT ANYMORE!
REALLY NOW -YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT! YOU CAN'T FOOL AN OLD PRO, MISS PURE-HEART!
(sob) OH, PLEASE DON'T KILL ME NOW, NOT AFTER ... I'VE SO MUCH TO LIVE FOR!
DARK ANGEL, ACCEPT THIS SACRIFICE TO YOUR GREATER GLORY!

THE ECLIPSE S ABLE TO WILL H S PHYSICAL ATOMS TO BE MOMENTARY NEGATIVE MATTER THUS WALK NG THROUGH THE CHURCH WALL-
CAN'T USE MY CALLUS LASER - IN THE DARK ONE OF THEM IS LIABLE TO GET TESS!
MUST RENDER THEM UNABLE TO FIGHT BACK TOO MANY FOR ME IF THEY GET THE CHANCE.
WHA'?
WHO?
I DON'T USUALLY HIT WOMEN, BUT YOU'RE EXCEPTIONS!
ECLIPSE! THANK HEAVENS!!
SOMEBODY PERFORM THE SACRIFICE — I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM!
YOU'LL HAVE TO BE FASTER THAN THAT, LADY-KILLER!
TOSH

LUCKILY, INSTINCT MADE ME GO NEGATIVE, SO THE KNIFE PASSED THROUGH AFTER A MINOR WOUND!
HUH?
NOW YOU'RE GONNA GET IT!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
SOMEBODY FIND A LIGHT- QUICK!
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE WHILE I CAN!
GET UP - ALL OF YOU! WE CAN STILL TAKE HIM TOGETHER... ANSWER ME!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT MISS ASTER?
YES, THANKS TO YOU - IF I JUST HAD SOME CLOTHES!
GIVE ME ANOTHER MINUTE!

AS THE LASER DARKNESS BEGINS TO DISSIPATE—

I DON'T MEAN TO SOUND UNAPPRECIATIVE, BUT I'D ALMOST RATHER WEAR NOTHING THAN A ROBE OF SUCH... MURDERERS!
THE POLICE WILL ROUND THEM UP - THEY'LL PAY FOR THEIR FUN AND GAMES!

Story & Art by
RONN FOSS

Special Thanks to GRASS GREEN, C CASEY, MARTIN L. GREIM, SHARON CRASE, and ALEX ALMARAZ

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Angelique™
SWEAT AND STEAM, YOU FOOLS — I'LL GIVE YOU EVERLASTING LIFE!
©'85
HE wants to see you NOW, personally — UPSTAIRS!
OH, GOD!
And if you won't come with me, HE'LL send His heavenly host!
ALL OF THEM?
HA-HA-HAH
HA HA-HA
MY HOST OUTNUMBERS HIS 1,000-TO-1!!

San Francisco Examiner

Man Conquers the Heights
..But Not His Hates

Reagan lashes 'barbaric' students

College riot

POLICE ON HORSEBACK CLASH WITH DEMONSTRATORS AT S.F. STATE
Mayor Alioto was hooking on the Labor Council

SFS pickets battle police

BULLETIN
SAN FRANCISCO — A mo...

Warns teachers

1500 Pickets Are Stationed At Campus

Striking teachers and students threw picket lines around San Francisco State College today as the school re-opened after a three-week holiday to face a new crisis.

THE POLICE MOVE IN AT S.F. STATE
In just a few hours they emptied the campus

Reagan says schools won't negotiate

SACRAMENTO (UPI) — Gov. Ronald Reagan does not agree with student militants very often but he made it clear today that he shares their view with them...

"The very idea of demanding or going down and bargaining is ridiculous," he said. The militant aims cannot negotiate with anybody."

The crisis at San Francisco State over claims for the Christmas holidays, dominated Reagan's first formal Capitol news conference since he...

Reagan granted Acting President S. Hayakawa far less harsh political and said he was winning a battle of attrition with the striking students.

Reagan said most of the 15 demands of the Black Students Union and the Third World Liberation Front were reasonable which the college had planned to institute without pressure from strikers.

He said other demands were "ridiculous."

The governor here said the demands cannot be negotiated. They say they want all 15 or there will be no end to the strike.

Reagan said there could be an amendment of demands by the college authorities which would "mean to negotiate." Then students and would have parent students in participate in the final decision.

Teachers Picket SF State

Originally appeared in STAR-STUDDED COMICS #17
Conceived & Directed by Coogan
Developed & Produced by Kelly
© 1969 by

STUDENTS CLASHED WITH POLICE AGAIN TODAY AT SAN FRANCISCO STATE COLLEGE RESULTING IN MASSIVE INJURIES AND SEVERAL ARRESTS...
ACROSS THE BAY AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY, NATIONAL GUARDSMEN WITH BAYONETED RIFLES AND SHERIFFS DEPUTIES USED TEAR GAS AND A PEPPER FOG MACHINE TO DISPERSE STUDENTS...
THIRD WORLD LIBERATION FRONT AND STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY LEADERS WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY FOR THE FOURTH TIME THIS MONTH!
THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST, SON! I ONLY HOPE YOU'RE UP TO THE TASK

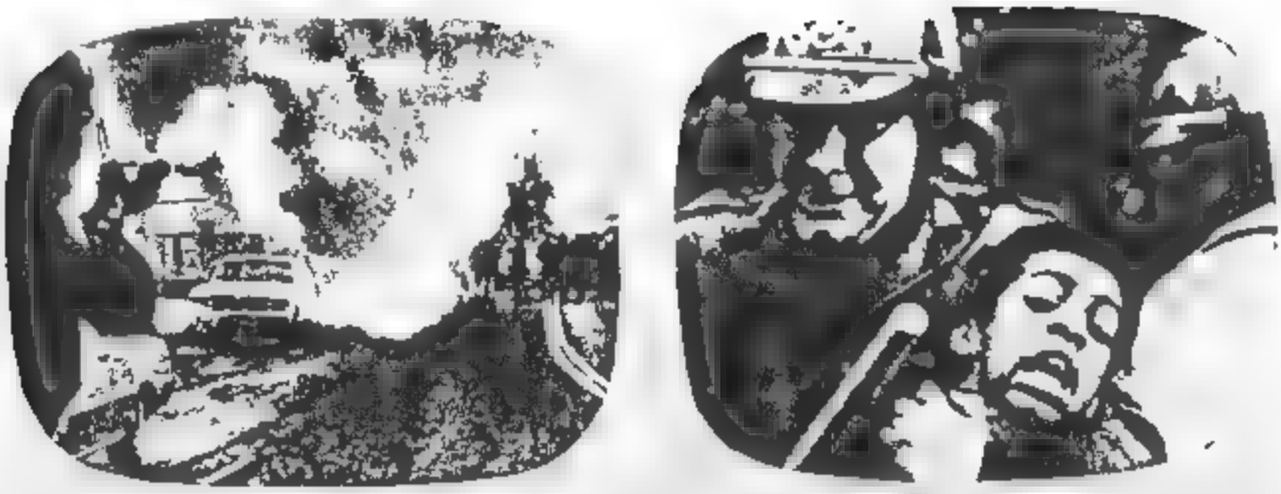
MEANWHILE, ON THE CAMPUS—
THE ESTABLISHMENT WON'T LISTEN TO OUR DEMANDS . DEMANDS OF DUE CIVIL RIGHTS... SO WE GOTTA' SHOW 'EM WE MEAN BUSINESS OTHERWISE THINGS AIN'T GONNA' CHANGE NOHOW!!
AN' WHEN I SAY BUSINESS I DON'T MEAN MORE JIVE TALK ABOUT CONFRONTATIONS WHERE THEY ACT DEAF! I MEAN WE GONNA' HAVE TO FIGHT, IF THAT'S THE ONLY WAY THEY CAN UNDERSTAND US"
I CAN APPRECIATE YOUR FEELING OF NEEDING TO FIGHT BACK, BUT HOW DO YOU COUNTER-ACT ARMED POLICE?
YEAH!
"RIGHT THIS MINUTE, GOIN' ON IN ONE OF THE CLASSROOMS, IS A COURSE IN GUERILLA WARFARE, TAUGHT BY A VIET-NAM VETERAN—
ACTION
ANOTHER WAY WHICH WILL SURPRISE HELL OUT OF THE PIGS, IS STANDIN' HERE NOW TO GIVE YOU A DEMONSTRATION OF HIS ARMOR' YEAH YOU HEARD RIGHT I SAID ARMOR THE ONLY DEFENSE AGIN NIGHT STICKS AND SMALL ARMS FIRE!!
"THE NEWSPAPERS TELL OF JAPANESE AND OTHER POLICE USING SHIELDS AND ARMOR AND THIS IS HOW I PROPOSE TO COUNTER THEM IT'S NOT HARD TO MAKE, AND YOU'LL FIND IT WORKS" "

Tac Squad: the Italian Version

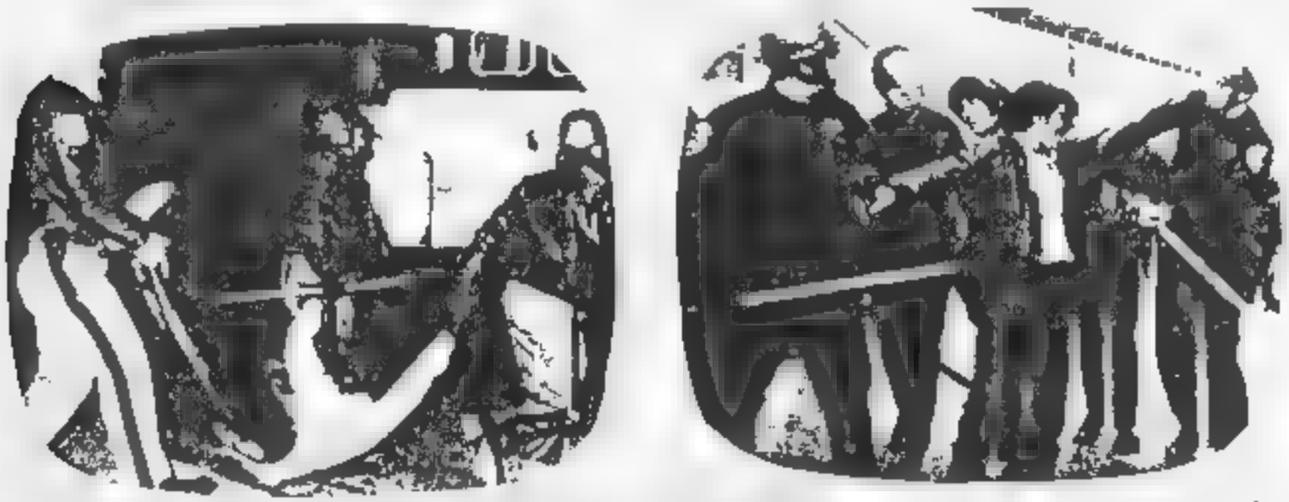
MEDIEVAL-LOOKING shields were part of equipment issued to riot police and soldiers in Mexico City who used clubs to disperse 10,000 demonstrators gathered in Central Plaza to demand repeal of Mexico's anti-subversive laws. Three days later President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz pledging that nothing "illegal or troublesome" would keep the Olympic Games out of Mexico City and promising to meet with student demonstrators warned that he would quell "systematic provocation" by students with armed force.

MOBILIZED STUDENTS SHORTLY ENCOUNTER -
WOTTA' HELL? WOODEN SWORDS AGAINST NIGHT STICKS?
UNIT 6, HEADQUARTERS - 240, 415, 594, 901, 999, CODE 3 - REPEAT: 999, CODE 3!" *
WITHIN MINUTES POLICE JEEPS WITH BARBED WIRE SCREENS PLOW THROUGH THE CROWD -
THEN THE DREADED TEAR GAS ATTACK!
SFPD
TV
4

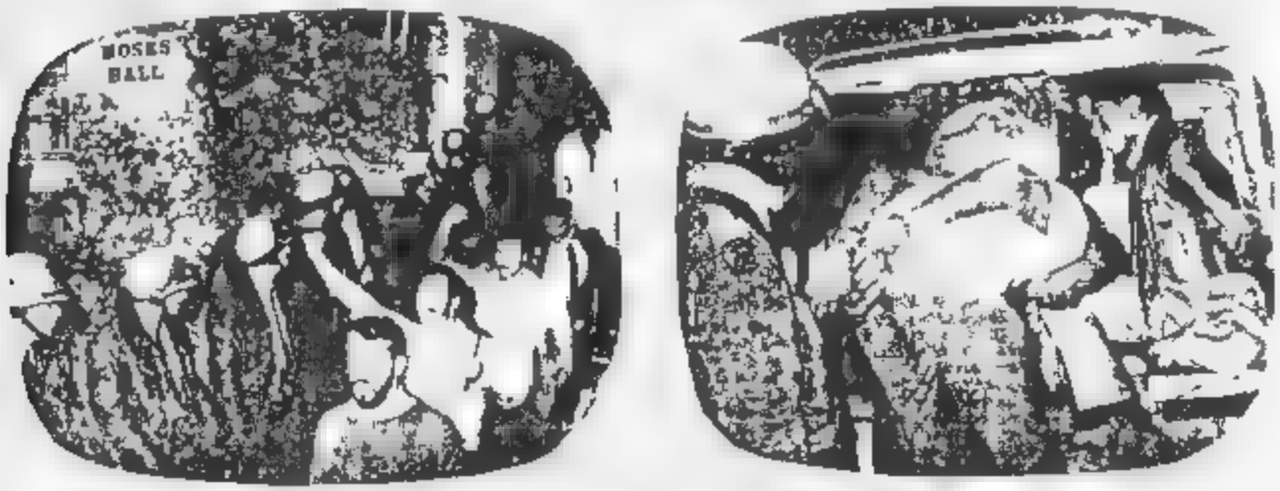
* EDITOR'S NOTE: CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL / POLICE CODES - ASSAULT, DISTURBING PEACE, MALICIOUS MISCHIEF, AMBULANCE NEEDED, HELP OFFICER, EMERGENCY.



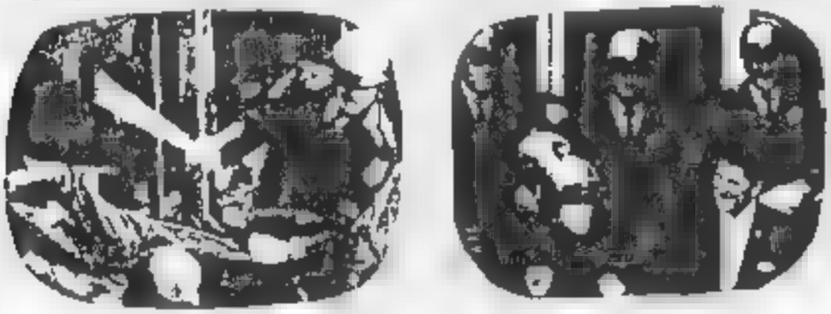
ONCE AGAIN THE TOP NEWS STORY IS STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS, THIS TIME POLICE

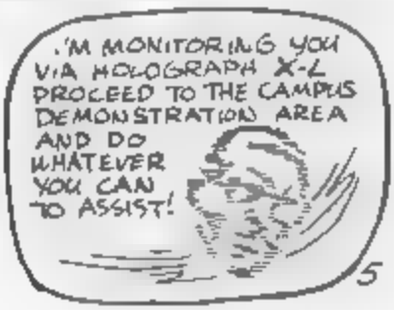


FOUND THEMSELVES WITH MORE OPPOSITION! ORDER, HOWEVER, WAS RESTORED!!



GOVERNOR REAGAN CONGRATULATED THE POLICE ON THEIR HEROIC RESTRAINT!





RESPONDING TO THE THREAT STUDENTS ARM THEMSELVES WITH GAS MASKS

WE'RE EVENLY MATCHED NOW - THE OUTCOME SHOULD BE DIFFERENT!

M ON CAMPUS PROF TEMPO' I'LL CONFRONT THE DISSIDENTS WITH AN ULTIMATUM . DISPERSING PEACEFULLY, OR.. DO WHATEVER I HAVE TO!!

HERE COMES EXCEL! WE CAN ALL GO HOME NOW - HE'LL HANDLE THEM ALL ALONE!

YEAH I READ ABOUT THAT GUY FULL ARMORED AND SUPER-LASER POWER!

THE POLICE WARNED YOU - NOW YOU HAVE 3 MINUTES TO DISPERSE OR.. ELSE-

SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES!

3 MINUTES LATER EXCEL USES LASER POWER TO LIGHT COMPLETED TO MELTED THE SIDE OF A BUILDING!!!

ALERTED IN ADVANCE THE POLICE HAVE DONNED INFRA RED GOGGLES, ENABLING THEM TO WITHSTAND EXCEL'S BLINDING FLASH AND SEARING HEAT! AS HE REDUCES POWER, A FIGURE STEPS FROM A NEARBY BUILDING.

NOW TRY ME!

BEFORE X-L CAN REGENERATE THE SIREN EMITS A CONTINUOUS BLAST OF ULTRASONICS - AS IF ONE BODY THE POLICE AND EXCEL CRINGE AND FALL BACK. THE STUDENTS PREPARED BY WEARING EAR GUARDS

THE POLICE STUMBLE AWAY TO THEIR CARS AND DRIVE OFF, AMIDST CHEERING STUDENTS, WHILE EXCEL'S NERVOUS SYSTEM BREAKS DOWN UNDER THE OVER LOAD—

WE GOT TO RESCUE X-L OR HIS ENTIRE DELICATE RESPONSORS WILL BE DAMAGED BEYOND REPAIR

ADJUSTING A CONTROL, PROF TEMPO PROJECTS DUPLICATE X-L HOLOGRAMS*

WHA'? DOZENS OF EXCELS! I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY BEFORE I'M CAPTURED!!

* NOTE. A 3-DIMENSIONAL IMAGE TRANSMITED BY LASER WITHOUT NECESSITY OF A RECEIVER.

RECOVERING, EXCEL RETURNS TO THE HIDDEN LAB OF PROF. TEMPO! THEN—

WE MUST SUPER-CHARGE YOU TO BE ABLE TO RESIST THE SIREN'S ULTRASONICS THE NEXT TIME YOU ENCOUNTER HER!

LATER, BACK ON CAMPUS, LANK TEMPO DISCREETLY ENTERS THE GIRLS DORMITORY

OH! WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I'M SYMPATHETIC TO YOUR CAUSE SONJA HAYES... OR SHOULD I CALL YOU SIREN?

IF YOU KNOW WHO I AM YOU ALSO KNOW I CAN BREAK YOUR EAR DRUMS, CAUSING DEATH! HOW DID YOU FIND OUT?

IT WASN'T HARD TO FIGURE FROM YOUR OPERATIC REPUTATION OF BREAKING GLASS BY HITTING A HIGH OCTAVE AND YOUR CURRICULUM OF ELECTRONICS, FOR AMPLIFICATION"

I MEAN YOU NO HARM— ALL I WANT TO KNOW IS WHY YOU AND OTHERS AS WELL, DISSENT!

MISTER, HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF THE CONSTITUTION GUARANTEED RIGHTS THAT MAY AS WELL BE FAIRY TALES? CAN YOU IMAGINE A THIRD-CLASS LIFE OF HATRED, POVERTY, LIES, AND ESTABLISHMENT PIDGEON HOLING"

HAVE YOU SEEN THE PAPERS AND T-V NEWS, WHAT THEY DO TO ANYONE WHO TRIES TO SPEAK OUT? YOU CALL THAT JUSTICE? WE GET LAW AND ORDER BUT IT AIN'T JUSTICE!
what is this - feeling I have... emotion, pain.. yes, a pain I can actually FEEL! But I'm a MACHINE — I'm not SUPPOSED to feel ANYTHING! I DO feel, though.. I UNDERSTAND her anxiety, and I fee.. I feel KINSHIP, a sort of — of.. LOVE! A love of peace, of honesty, true justice, and friendship!!
I-I CAN ONLY SAY I'M VERY VERY SORRY — AND PROMISE YOU, AT LEAST THAT TIN-CAN HERO EXCELSIOR WON'T EVER INTERVENE AGAIN!
RETURNING TO THE LAB, LANK CONFRONTS HIS CREATOR -
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU WON'T ASSIST THE POLICE AGAINST THE DEMONSTRATORS ANYMORE? YOU HAVE NO CHOICE!
EVERYONE HAS A CHOICE, PROF TEMPO - EVEN I!
YOU? YOU'RE NOT ANYONE! YOU'RE SUBJECT TO MY ORDERS!
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, GOD? NO MAN IS SUBJECT TO ANYONE'S ORDERS!
WHA? I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S COME OVER YOU BUT I'LL SIMPLY TURN YOU OFF!!
NO YOU WON'T... EVER AGAIN! NO MAN SHOULD CONTROL ANOTHER! BE THANKFUL I'M LEAVING YOU THE MONITOR AND HOLOGRAM TRANSMITTER!!
B-BUT, YOU'RE ALMOST LIKE A SON TO ME! HOW COULD YOU... HOW COULD I — HOW COULD THEY? ??
ZIT!
SOMEHOW, I'VE GOT TO TRY TO BRING JUSTICE BACK TO LAW AND ORDER!
JMC End 8

A LETTER FROM DAWN FOSS:

I see myself at my dump-like desk ages past my usual retirement to bed, passionately drawing to make a deadline. The next morning I will send the artwork to an editor, crumple into slumber, and when I awaken in the evening, suddenly decide to drive to Missouri to visit my dad on my last cash.

My image of my future may not seem too romantic, but life wouldn't work any other way for me. It is the way I lived with my father, a lifestyle I have always been happy with. My father lives the saga of the typical artist: unappreciated, unpaid, just barely "scrapin' the bottom of the bucket" as his favorite cliche goes.

Although we hardly ever seemed to have any money, there was always just enough to go out and do the things we loved to do together. When all dad had was $20, we'd do $15 on a movie, fresh strawberry pie and cheeseburger deluxe. Some of our best cheeseburger deluxes we ate states away from home, on a visit to a relative or a friend or a friend's relatives.

I remember once we were coming home from work and school (in a town called Eminence, about 35 miles from home) and dad said, like a light had just popped on above his head, "How'd you like to go to Ohio?" I don't think we even stopped back home, just lifted off in the ol' Pinto ("Sweetheart") and cruised clear through the next state and into Ohio.

Of course, these excursions took time he could have used for work, so when he felt he had to compensate for undone artwork, he'd stay awake late into the night, drawing like a hurricane until he felt he was caught up. Then he'd come out of his den looking like a new mother, his hair poofed out everywhere, eyes bloodshot, but smiling, holding out his work to me proudly (we always went over each other's art). Then he'd go upstairs and fall into bed.

My father has spent most of his life (for as long as I've known him) going in circles of play, work, sleep. He is not famous. He is not rich. But I love him, and his free spirit has been an influence on my life since I first knew him. Money and fame are all very nice, but dad has shown me that if you're not happy, you're nothing; for yourself or for your family, happiness has to come first.

My future looks perfect to me if I can live the kind of life my father lives. I know it's not always easy, but if I can be as free with life as dad is, I'll be happy. Happiness and freedom are what I want from my future, thanks to my father who has shown me all these things can be.

--ALEXANDRA FOSS, age 17, for Speech Class, Corvallis, Oregon, 11/85

JOE KUBERT
3·24·92
BEST WISHES TO RONN - -
FROM JOE

The Comic Log #2

WHAT'S Your OPINION OF HAWKMAN?